

Special Advertising Section

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Q&A
Quotes from experts
across the Garden State

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ST. JOSEPH'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Dr. Tanuja Damani, director of robotic surgery, St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center

Q: What concerns do women usually have about surgery?

A: Even though women often drive the

health care needs of the family, they tend to put their own medical issues behind others, especially when it comes to major surgery. Their main concern is a prolonged recovery that takes significant time away from family and work. At St. Joseph's, we are trying to create awareness that robotic surgery can treat a whole gamut of conditions, from uterine fibroids to gastrointestinal surgery for gallstones, reflux, hernias and colorectal cancers.



Tanuja Damani, MD.

Q: What benefits does robotic surgery offer?

A: Robotic surgery is performed through tiny, quarter-inch incisions, and that means much less pain compared with tradi-

tional surgery. Also, this approach to surgery, which involves delicate maneuvers and decreased tissue trauma, has a proven record of less blood loss and less scar tissue formation. Robotic surgery also requires shorter hospital stays, and provides a quicker return to baseline life. The added benefit is improved cosmesis, the cosmetic aspect of full recovery. Patients have tiny incisions that heal beautifully and are barely visible.

Q: What do patients need to understand about robotic surgery?

A: It's important to dispel the myth that the robot performs the surgery. The surgeon controls every aspect of the surgery. The robot is

a tool that allows the surgeon to perform complex, minimally invasive surgery with greater precision, vision and dexterity. The robotic-assisted operation performed on the inside of the body is exactly the same as if the procedure was performed as traditional open surgery.

"Most patients who undergo robotic surgery don't even take any pain medication postsurgery."

—Dr. Tanuja Damani