

Robotics program: one of the largest on the West coast

A high-tech helping hand

by Maureen Goins

Imagine: major surgery through an incision the width of a paper clip. With Sacred Heart's sophisticated robotic technology and physicians so adept they're training others across the country to use it, more and more surgeries—from heart to prostate—are now being performed with da Vinci[®] robotic technology from Intuitive Surgical.

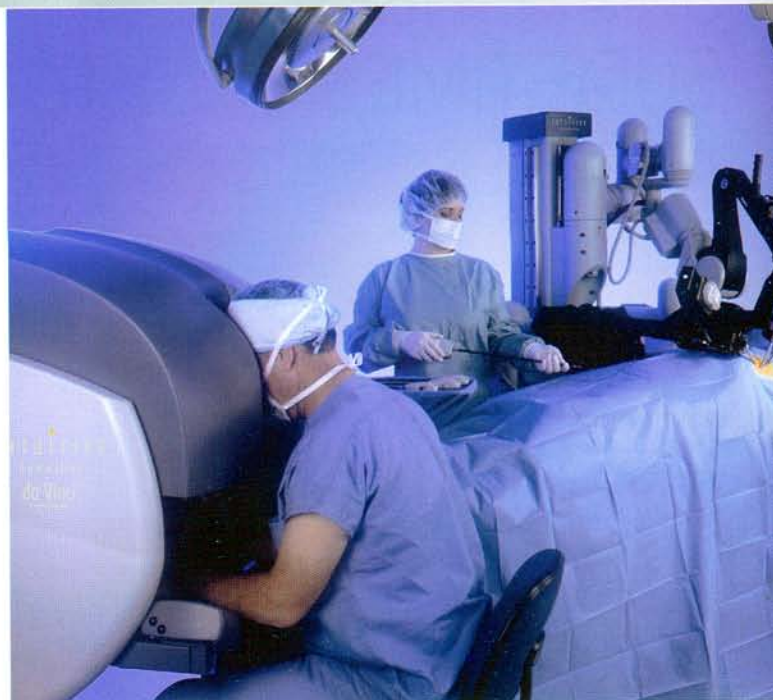
The advantage for patients? For most, a minimally invasive approach offers substantially less pain, less blood loss, fewer side effects, shorter hospitalization and a much shorter recovery.

"Remaining at the leading edge of technology—and finding new and better ways to improve the quality of medical care for our patients—is always a priority at Sacred Heart Medical Center," says Mike Wilson, president. "Our robotics capabilities, combined with our surgeons' skill, provides new options to consider for certain procedures."

Robotics program expands

The robotics program at Sacred Heart—started in 2002—is now one of the largest on the West coast and has developed into a regional center of excellence for minimally invasive surgery. Only about four medical teams in the country have done as many robotic cardiac surgeries as at Sacred Heart, particularly mitral valve repairs.

In fact, Sacred Heart's robotics program is growing and attracting even more patients from across the state and the region. To meet the demand, a second da Vinci[®] robot



was added in May, and the first robot purchased in 2002 was updated with the latest technology.

Naturally, more procedures means better outcomes, an important consideration for patients. To date, more than 200 robotic heart surgeries and 75 prostate surgeries have been performed, with gynecological surgeons recently learning how to use the devices for procedures such as hysterectomies.

"Robotic surgery allows us to take cardiac and thoracic surgery to the next level," says Leland Siwek, MD, a cardiovascular surgeon who was the first at Sacred Heart to become a leading expert in the robotics area (he now trains other physicians worldwide). "It's like having my hands and eyes miniaturized and placed inside the patient, where I have maximum control like never before."

Treating prostate cancer with robotic technology is also an option at Sacred Heart. Prostate cancer is now the second leading cause of cancer-related death in men, with approximately 16 percent of American men diagnosed with prostate cancer sometime in their life. David Mikkelsen, MD, a urologic surgeon, notes that 40 percent of such procedures will likely be done through minimally invasive techniques by the end of 2007, the majority of which will be robotic.

Conventional procedures remain viable options for many patients who might not be candidates for robotic surgery.

Additional information is available by visiting www.shmc.org, by talking with your physician or by calling (509) 47-HEART.

What is robotic surgery?

Robotic-assisted surgery is performed using the da Vinci® Surgical System—the only operative surgical robot approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Surgeons use a three-dimensional computer system to manipulate four robotic arms. A pencil-sized video camera held by one of the arms is inserted through a tiny incision to provide magnified, three-dimensional images while reproducing the exact movements of the human hands and wrists, but with more dexterity. The robot is controlled by a surgeon, who sits at a console, while another surgeon remains at the patient's side.

Surgical “hands” perform extremely precise movements like never before ... in very small spaces. The robotic arms can even rotate a full 360 degrees, allowing the surgeon dramatically enhanced visualization, precision, control and dexterity, often performing complex minimally invasive surgeries.

Types of robotic-assisted surgery available at Sacred Heart

Cardiac

- Mitral valve repair—correction of stenosis or regurgitation in the mitral valve of the heart
- Atrial septal defect repair—to repair “holes” in the heart usually present at birth. If left untreated, it can result in heart failure or stroke
- Coronary artery bypass graft—taking a vessel from another part of the body (often the leg) and rerouting it to the heart to improve blood flow previously restricted by a blocked artery

Urology

- Radical Prostatectomy—nerve-sparing removal of the prostate gland in men with clinically-localized prostate cancer

Gynecological

- Hysterectomy—for the removal of the uterus
- Myomectomy—for the removal of uterine fibroids

Calendar of Events

December 3

Baby's First Christmas, 12-3 p.m.
Sacred Heart Women's Health Center
Bring the family out for Baby's first photo with Santa! Toddlers will enjoy cookie decorating, story time and music activities. 474-2400. FREE!

December 7

Back & Neck Pain Seminar, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
Sacred Heart Doctors Bldg., Suite 1000
Call the Sacred Heart Spine Center, 474-4535. FREE!

December 7

Hip & Knee Pain Seminar, 10-11 a.m.
Sacred Heart Doctors Bldg., Suite 1000
Call the Sacred Heart Bone & Joint Center, 474-7400. FREE!

February 1

Kids at Heart luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Spokane Convention Center. Call Sacred Heart Children's Hospital, 474-2819.

February 2

“Go Red for Women” day
Wear red in support of education and awareness of women's heart disease. Call the American Heart Association, 534-1500.

February 7

“Go Red for Women” luncheon
Davenport Hotel
Sponsored by Sacred Heart Medical Center and the American Heart Association, 534-1500.

ONGOING

Health education classes and programs

Offered at local hospitals.
Call CHER (Community Health Education & Resources), 232-8138, for class schedules, information and registration.

Mother-Baby Time

(support group for moms with new babies)
Meets every Wednesday. Call 474-2400 for information and meeting times.

Prayer, bereavement support & stress reduction seminars

Providence Center for Faith and Healing. Call 474-3008 for details.

Cancer support groups

Providence Cancer Center. Call 474-5490 for more information.