

Saint John's

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THE LATEST MEDICAL ADVANCES AND

INNOVATIONS FROM SAINT JOHN'S

Minimally invasive lung cancer surgery allows for quicker recovery

A lot of people who were previous smokers are getting lung cancer," says Robert B. Cameron, M.D., who practices thoracic surgical oncology at Saint John's. "If you were a long-term smoker, you should ask your doctor whether you should get a low-dose screening CAT scan, which can detect the disease at its earliest and most curable stage."

Cameron, who has specialized in cancers of the chest region, has performed thousands of lung cancer surgeries during the last 15 years using minimally invasive techniques. "I'm able to do 80 percent of cases with small incisions, which allows for quicker recovery," Cameron explains.

"Patients typically stay in the hospital for five days and are fully recovered in three to four weeks. This is in contrast to large incision surgery, which keeps the patient in the hospital for a week or two and requires six to 12 weeks of recovery time."

"There has also been a dramatic increase in the number of people developing cancer of the esophagus, probably due to the

increase in acid reflux disease," Cameron says. "If you are experiencing persistent heartburn, see a gastroenterologist to be evaluated for an upper GI exam." As with lung cancer, Cameron uses small incisions with small scopes for many esophageal surgeries. Most patients are home in five to seven days and recover in four to six weeks following this type of surgery.



Robert B. Cameron, M.D.

Update on HPV Prevention



Ronald Leichter, M.D.

As a gynecological oncologist, Ronald Leichter, M.D., specializes in those cancers unique to women "below the waist." Leichter, who has been with Saint John's since 1994, consults on patients at JWC. It is currently recommended that if women have three normal pap smears in a row, they only need to have a pap exam every other year instead of annually. "This recommendation concerns me," says Leichter. "Even though this group of women is at low risk for developing cervical cancer, scheduling an annual pap smear means that a woman will also receive a pelvic and rectal exam, during which ovarian and rectal tumors can be detected at their early stages, when they are most easily treated."

"If a pap smear is abnormal, we now do a test for certain subtypes of the human papillomavirus (HPV) that are associated with cervical cancer," Leichter continues. "About 50 to 60 percent of all women carry HPV, but most clear the virus spontaneously through their immune system. Those who don't may develop precancerous changes in the cervix that can, over time, lead to cancer."

There is now a vaccine available that offers protection from these dangerous HPV subtypes for six years. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, a national group of experts that advises the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recommends that girls 11 to 12 years old be vaccinated before they become sexually active. "Ask your pediatrician about the HPV vaccine, which is administered in a series of three shots," advises Leichter. "Be aware, however, that the vaccine does not offer protection from other sexually transmitted diseases."