

## ARE YOU FACING SURGERY?

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Southeast Georgia Health System surgeons now use robotic system for general surgery

# Expanding da Vinci's Reach

## General Surgeries Performed with da Vinci

The da Vinci® Surgical System is rapidly becoming the preferred tool for a number of general surgeries. At the Southeast Georgia Health System Brunswick Campus, the da Vinci system is being used in the following general surgeries:

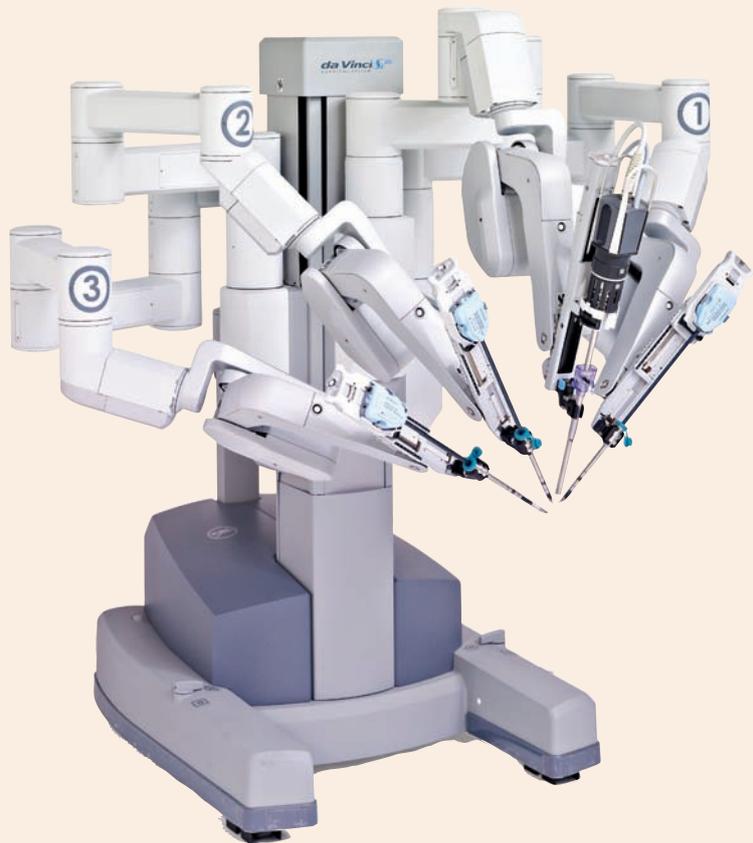
- Colon resection
- Hernia repairs
- Appendectomy
- Gallbladder removal
- Lysis of adhesions (scar tissue removal)
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, and hiatal hernias

The da Vinci® Surgical System has been in use for just a little over a decade, yet it has already become one of the most trusted technologies in modern medicine. In 2000, zero prostatectomies (surgery to remove the prostate) were performed using the da Vinci robot. In 2011, 83 percent of prostatectomies were performed with it, according to the company's website.

Urology and urogynecology surgeons were the first to use the da Vinci for prostatectomies, hysterectomies and other gynecologic procedures. Since then, da Vinci's reach has expanded and Southeast Georgia Health System surgeons are now using da Vinci for general surgery, too.

### Specific Uses in General Surgery

"It's been about a year that we've been using da Vinci for general surgery," says Stephen G. Barrett, M.D., board-certified general surgeon, Southeast Georgia Physician Associates—Glynn General & Vascular Surgery, a strategic affiliate of the Health System. "We use it for gallbladder surgery and hernia repair mainly, with the expectation of branching out to more complicated intestinal work, such as colon and small bowel resections."





From left, general surgeons *Stephen F. Kitchen, M.D.*, *Vincent K. Arlauskas, M.D.*, and *Stephen G. Barrett, M.D.*

Because of its precision instruments, the robot is particularly beneficial in surgeries involving tight spaces. The system’s 3-D camera also offers surgeons high-definition views unlike any they’ve had before.

“There are procedures we’re doing with da Vinci that we wouldn’t even have attempted to do laparoscopically,” says Vincent K. Arlauskas, M.D., general surgeon, Southeast Georgia Physician Associates—Glynn General & Vascular Surgery. “It gives us views and access around major arteries and veins more safely than other types of surgery.”

### Patient Benefits

It’s clear the surgeons approve of the da Vinci Surgical System. But what are the benefits to patients?

“The movements of the robot tend to be just with the tip of the instrument, so there’s very little back and forth movement,” says Stephen F. Kitchen, M.D., board-certified general surgeon and a member of the Health System medical staff. “That translates to less movement inside the patient and therefore less discomfort and a quicker recovery. Not to mention, the scar is minimal compared to traditional techniques.”

The average hospital stay for patients having gallbladder surgery used to be five to seven days, Dr. Kitchen says. Fifteen years ago, it dropped to three days when laparoscopic surgery was introduced. With da Vinci, patients often go home the same day.

“I highly recommend it,” says Rodney Evener, 66, who had his gallbladder removed with da Vinci robotic surgery. “I had no problems—no pain, I wasn’t in the hospital very long at all and I don’t even have a scar. It was very easy!” ●

## Benefits of da Vinci Procedures

Robotic surgery can offer numerous potential benefits over traditional approaches, which often involve making a large abdominal incision. Potential benefits include:

- Less pain during recovery
- Less blood loss
- Fewer complications
- A lower risk of infection
- Less scarring
- A shorter hospital stay
- A faster return to normal daily activities
- Fewer hospital readmissions

What other procedures are we performing using da Vinci?

- Hysterectomy
- Myomectomy (removal of fibroids)
- Ovarian cystectomy (removal of ovarian cysts and masses)
- Sacrocolpopexy (treatment for pelvic organ prolapse)
- Treatment of cervical and endometrial cancer
- Prostatectomy (removal of prostate gland)
- Partial nephrectomy (removal of cancerous tumor and not entire kidney)
- Adrenalectomy (removal of adrenal glands)