The di Vinci in Cardiothoracic Surgery

Joseph Wilson, MD and his "Heart Team" (LEFT to RIGHT): Perfusionist Cesar Davlantes; Physician Assistant Jef Saunders; Joseph Wilson, MD; Rick Westergard, Registered Nurse First assistant, and Mike Padilla, Registered Nurse First Assistant.

Eisenhower Medical Center surgeons continue to find new applications for the da Vinci® S HD™ System, the state-of-the-art,minimally invasive surgical system that combines computer and robotic technologies to create a new type of surgery known as robotic-assisted surgery. Eisenhower Medical Center was the first facility in the Coachella Valley to offer this less invasive technology.

While Eisenhower physicians use the da Vinci System extensively for minimally invasive prostate and hysterectomy surgeries, this advanced technology is being used increasingly in cardiothoracic surgery. In April 2010, Eisenhower Cardiothoracic Surgeon, Joseph Wilson,MD used the da Vinci System to perform a mediastinal (middle of the chest) excision.“This particular patient had a cancer in her mediastinal area between her heart and lung,” shares Dr.Wilson.“Ordinarily, in traditional surgery, we would have had to make a four to five-inch incision to remove the tumor.With the da Vinci, the incision is just one to two centimeters [less than 3/4 inch]. I was able to perform the procedure and remove the tumor, which was encapsulated, with little problem and less trauma to the patient.”

Indian Wells resident Shirley Peterson went to two other hospitals before arriving at Eisenhower and Dr.Wilson.“Both hospitals recommended chemotherapy right away,” shares Peterson.“My oncologist Dr. Tom Reynolds really encouraged me to get a plan in place and seek out other options, and gave me the names of several doctors. That is how I arrived at Dr.Wilson’s office and learned about the thoracic surgery option using the da Vinci.”

Shirley Peterson was very impressed with not only Dr.Wilson, but also his staff as well.“Dr.Wilson told me this was the least invasive approach, and told me I’d be out of the hospital within a day,” says Peterson. “It was his confidence in the procedure, and his overall manner, that made me sure that this was the right thing to do.”

She is delighted with the results.“It’s a wonderful thing to be able to have that type of surgical procedure done,” explains Peterson.“I had a little pain after the surgery and took a prescribed pain medication for only four days after the surgery…and that was it. The three little dots [incisions] that were on my side are all healed up. I can even go back to wearing a swimsuit.”

Eisenhower physicians have been using the da Vinci system for about two and one-half years, and the technology has become routine for many of the surgical procedures performed at the Medical Center. The da Vinci procedure offers a host of benefits for patients including: shorter hospital stays, less pain, less risk of infection, less blood loss, less scarring, faster recovery and a quicker return to normal activities.“It has really been a blessing for our patients to have this technology available here in the desert,” says Dr.Wilson.

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