

Robotic *da Vinci*® Technology Ideal for Hernia and Gallbladder Surgeries



It is well known that the *da Vinci*® robot system has decreased recovery time for people undergoing major operations such as a hysterectomy or cardiac procedures, but surgeons can also use this modern surgical technique to treat basic health issues such as hiatal hernia or gallbladder problems.

What is a Hernia?

“A hernia is a protrusion of part of an organ through the muscle wall that surrounds it,” explains Nisha S. Dhir MD, FACS, board certified in general surgery. “A hiatal hernia occurs when the upper part of the stomach pushes up into the chest through the diaphragm.” While many people over the age of 50 have small hiatal hernias, this condition may affect people of all ages and can sometimes require surgical treatment.

Surgery for Hiatal Hernia

Surgical treatment may be necessary if the hernia is in danger

“For most patients, the *da Vinci* procedure offers several potential benefits over traditional open surgery. These benefits may include: shorter hospital stay; less pain and scarring; less risk of infection; faster recovery; and a quicker return to normal activities.”

Nisha S. Dhir MD, FACS,
Board Certified in General Surgery

of becoming strangulated (twisted in a way that cuts off blood supply) or if complicated by severe gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) or inflammation of the esophagus. “In these cases, surgery can reduce the size of the hernia or prevent strangulation,” Dr. Dhir says, “and a stomach wrap can be performed to prevent reflux symptoms.”

If your doctor recommends surgery, you may be a candidate for a new, less invasive procedure using *da Vinci*® technology. This procedure uses a surgical system designed to help the surgeon see more clearly with 3D-high definition vision.

“For most patients, the *da Vinci*® procedure offers several potential benefits over traditional open surgery,” Dr. Dhir explains. “These benefits may include: shorter hospital stay; less pain and scarring; less risk of infection; less blood loss and fewer transfusions; faster recovery; and a quicker return to normal activities.”

Gallbladder Surgery Using *da Vinci*®

Many common health issues include problems with the gallbladder. “If you have severe gallbladder symptoms, such as right side abdominal pain under the ribcage, nausea, vomiting, bloating and belching after eating, your doctor may recommend surgical removal since it is an organ you can live without,” Dr. Dhir says. Gallbladder removal, known as a cholecystectomy, also can be performed using the *da Vinci*® system.

If you are experiencing symptoms of a hiatal hernia or gallbladder problems, Princeton HealthCare System can help find an experienced healthcare provider for you. Call 1.888.PHCS4YOU (1.888.742.7496).

WorkingWell

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Princeton HealthCare System

1.800.527.0035 | www.princetonhcs.org

Gain Control of Emotional Eating

When faced with sudden stress or a life-changing event, it is natural to temporarily find food unappealing or to find yourself overeating for a little comfort. But while an occasional loss of appetite or overindulgence is not a problem, long term emotional eating can have serious effects on your health.

The Underlying Psychology of Emotional Eating

“Emotional eating is used—often unconsciously—as a way to suppress or try to soothe negative emotions, such as sadness, loneliness, anger, fear and stress,” says Sheri Solinski, LCSW, LCADC, senior primary therapist of Princeton House Behavioral Health’s Women’s Program. “It can be triggered by a major life event, such as losing your job or a relationship ending through divorce or death, but it can also be an ongoing problem you have experienced at various times throughout your life.”

Either way, emotional eating can lead you to use food as a distraction instead of dealing directly with a painful situation. In time, your emotional approach to food can make your underlying problems even worse, by creating nutritional imbalances that can increase depression and decrease your ability to handle stress.

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Senior Primary Therapist, PHBH Women’s Program

Healthier Ways to Cope

If you have tried to control your emotional eating on your own but have failed, professional counseling may be the answer. Individual counseling or participation in Princeton House Behavioral Health’s Women’s Emotional Eating Program can help you understand why you use food the way you do and help you develop new coping skills to handle the stressors that cause your emotional eating.

“The key is to help women who are self-regulating their emotions and moods through food to understand how they misuse food and what they can do to heal themselves,” says Solinski. “This is a manageable condition, once you recognize what is motivating your behavior and train yourself to make healthy choices for your body and spirit.”

To learn more about the Emotional Eating Program, visit www.princetonhouse.org. To make a referral, call 888.437.1610.

Four Steps to Control Your Cravings

- **Take Time:** Before reaching for food, give your craving time to pass.
- **Takes Notes:** Keep a food diary of what you eat and when to look for connections between your mood and food.
- **Take Charge:** Don’t keep comfort foods you can’t resist in your home; if you feel the urge to eat something between meals stock up on health snacks.
- **Take Care:** Find different ways to handle your emotions, such as relaxation techniques or distracting yourself with an activity you enjoy.



Princeton HealthCare System
Employee Assistance Program

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Many people need assistance at some time in life. The Employee Assistance Program is a free, confidential counseling service offered by your employer to assist you, and those living with you, in resolving personal difficulties.

Proper Planning Can Prevent Workplace Injuries

Whether you are at home or in the workplace, accidents do happen. But most workplace injuries can be prevented by keeping certain safety points in mind.

“Workplace injuries fall into a few key categories,” says Siddiq A. Faisal, MD, who specializes in occupational medicine at University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro. “Simply stated, there are strains and sprains, cuts and lacerations, trips and falls, and repetitive use injuries. In each case, taking proper precautions can make the difference between employees being injury-free and employees experiencing a medical condition that can range from mild to severe.”

Common Sense Measures Prevent Injury

Back, shoulder and neck sprains and strains are common among all workers, whether they man a desk all day or do physical labor. Practicing proper lifting and carrying techniques—lifting with the legs, with objects grasped close to the body in both hands, and turning by moving the feet first rather than twisting the body—can prevent many of these injuries. Not taking shortcuts, such as lifting too many items at one time or working at a speed that is faster than recommended, can also keep injuries at bay.

“The key really is to think and work smart. Silly as it may sound, don’t take a chance by using your wheeled desk chair as a stepstool. Don’t leave obstacles in the way of yourself and coworkers.”

--Siddiq A. Faisal, MD
Occupational Medicine

University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro



Cuts and lacerations can be prevented by using the proper tool for the job and by keeping body parts away from the hazard.

Trip and fall injuries are generally the result of obstacles being placed in unexpected locations and misuse of equipment. Both can easily be avoided by remaining alert and thinking about the possible dangers of an action before proceeding.

“The key really is to think and work smart,” says Dr. Faisal. “Silly as it may sound, don’t take a chance by using your wheeled desk chair as a stepstool. Don’t leave obstacles in the way of yourself and your coworkers.”

Repetitive use injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, can best be avoided by taking short breaks from lengthy repetitive tasks and maintaining proper posture while working.

For assistance finding a physician affiliated with Princeton HealthCare System, call 1.888.PHCS4YOU (1.888.742.7496) or visit www.princetonhcs.org.

Six Tips to Workplace Safety

- Keep workstations clean and orderly.
- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Don’t take unnecessary risks or shortcuts.
- When lifting, use both hands and lift with your legs, not your back.
- Use the right tools for the job.
- Take short breaks from repetitive tasks to avoid injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

EAP addresses a wide range of concerns, including:

- Marital or Financial Issues • Alcohol or Drug Abuse • Depression or Anxiety • Work-related Stress

A professional counselor will work with you to provide an **absolutely confidential** assessment of the problem, as well as a suggested plan of action. If appropriate, we will coordinate a referral to a qualified resource in your community and provide ongoing support and follow-up.

For a free consultation or additional information, please contact the **Employee Assistance Program**.



Don't Do It Alone When Caring for an Aging Parent

It can be challenging to manage work and family responsibilities, but when caring for an elderly parent, the pressure can seem overwhelming. An estimated one in four households is caring for an elderly parent while holding down a full-time job. By 2020, that number is expected to rise to one in three households.

“This is definitely becoming a more common situation, which fortunately means there are more resources becoming available to caregivers,” says Christina D. Reeg, LCSW, an EAP specialist with Princeton HealthCare System’s Employee Assistance Program. “In general, it’s important to keep in mind that you are not alone and you can set healthy boundaries to help manage your stress, which will make the situation better for you and for the person you’re caring for.”

Stress Management for Caregivers

The first step is to let your employer know about your new family responsibilities. Your employer may be able to offer some flexibility in your work schedule, and temporary family medical leave may also be available.

Siblings and other family members should develop a plan so that everyone contributes to the caregiving. Still, no matter what type of care a parent may need or how many people are working together to provide that care,

caregivers need to adapt expectations related to their own lives, whether it’s letting the housecleaning slip a bit or having less privacy after moving a parent into their home.

“This is a time of change for everyone,” says Reeg. “It’s new territory, but there is plenty of help available, from our Employee Assistance Program, to the Office on Aging in your county, to online resources. Time management is key, and that includes the caregiver making time to have their own needs met. If you don’t take proper care of yourself, you can’t possibly provide good care to anyone else.

For more information on counseling and other services available through the Employee Assistance Program, call 800-527-0035.

Tips to Make Caregiving Easier

- Have patience; remember your parent is not intentionally being difficult or uncooperative.
- Remember the person inside, even if their personality has changed.
- Watch for nonverbal cues to identify their health condition, personal needs and feelings.
- Make time for stress-reducing self-care.
- Share the responsibilities with siblings and other family members, or seek outside help to lighten your load.

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Christina D. Reeg, LCSW
EAP Specialist