



Robotic-assisted Surgery Helps Women Recover Faster

Women today have more treatment options than their mothers' generation did when facing gynecologic cancers, fibroids, endometriosis, pelvic prolapse and other uterine conditions. A few years ago, a patient who needed gynecologic surgery faced an open surgical procedure that required a large incision. Now if surgery is needed, laparoscopic and robotic-assisted surgeries may be an option involving fewer risks and a faster recovery.

With robotic-assisted procedures, patients typically go home the next day and recover in as few as two weeks, compared with a recovery time of four to six weeks after open surgery.

These less-invasive surgical procedures involve tiny incisions just a few millimeters in length compared to larger, 5- to 7-inch incisions that are common with open surgeries.

da Vinci® Surgical System

Specially trained surgeons at Highland Hospital perform minimally invasive and robotic surgery using the FDA-approved *da Vinci* Surgical System. In fact, Highland's gynecologic oncology surgeons began using the *da Vinci* in 2008, and were the first in the area to provide minimally invasive options for gynecologic conditions.

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Gynecologic oncologists Sajeena Thomas, Eugene Toy, Cynthia Angel and Brent DuBeshter in front of one of Highland's two *da Vinci* devices used for minimally invasive surgery. Highland is among the top hospitals in New York State for minimally invasive gynecologic cancer treatment.

Maintaining Balance as You Age



Daniel Mendelson, M.S., M.D.

Most older adults know that losing muscle mass is part of aging. They may not be thinking about another side effect – loss of balance – but they should.

"Balance is a big deal for older adults – as important as strength and conditioning," says Daniel Mendelson, a geriatrician and Co-Director of the Geriatric Fracture Center at Highland Hospital. "Balance problems are among the most common reasons older adults seek help from a doctor. And they can lead to serious injury: poor balance makes you more prone to falls that can lead to hip fractures."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly more than one-third of adults ages 65 years and older fall each year. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths.

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Robotic-assisted Surgery

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Highland's gynecologic oncologists treat patients with cervical, ovarian, uterine and vaginal cancers. Cynthia Angel, M.D.; Brent DuBeshter, M.D.; Sajeena Thomas, M.D.; and Eugene Toy, M.D., are with their patients through diagnosis, surgery, treatment and follow-up care. The team performs the most gynecologic oncology procedures in the region and leads New York state by volume in using the robotic (*da Vinci*) surgical system for gynecologic malignancies.

The *da Vinci* system allows the surgeon to operate from a console while viewing a three-dimensional image of the surgical field. It translates the surgeon's hand, wrist and finger movements into precise, real-time movements of tiny surgical instruments inside the patient's body.

Women may benefit from robotic-assisted surgery in a number of ways, including:

- Small incisions and minimal scarring
- Less pain
- Less blood loss and need for transfusion during surgery
- Less risk of infection
- Shorter hospital stay
- Quicker recovery and return to normal activities

In addition, if follow-up treatments are needed after surgery, such as for gynecologic cancers, women may be ready for the next phase of treatment more quickly.

Highland Hospital's Leadership in Gynecologic Surgery

The Gynecologic Oncology Program at Highland Hospital recently received Disease-Specific Certification for uterine and ovarian cancer from The Joint Commission, the nation's main accrediting body in health care.

"Pursuing this recognition demonstrates our commitment to provide high-quality care," said Dr. Angel, who led the effort for certification. "In addition, to maintain certification, our program will continually re-evaluate our practices and outcomes so we can best serve our patients and their families."

Helping You Heal

Whether you are facing hysterectomy, myomectomy (removal of uterine fibroids), surgery to repair vaginal/uterine prolapse, or treatment for endometriosis or excessive menstrual bleeding, our surgeons are

skilled in robotic-assisted gynecologic procedures that may help you heal faster so you can get back to work, family and life.

To learn more about surgical options in gynecological oncology at Highland Hospital, visit HighlandHospital.org.

Hysterectomy: Know Your Options

Hysterectomy (surgery to remove the uterus) is one of the most commonly performed surgeries in the U.S. It may be recommended for treatment of cervical and uterine cancers, endometriosis, fibroids or other uterine conditions. Hysterectomy can be performed in a number of ways, depending on the reason for surgery and a patient's health history:

- Open/abdominal hysterectomy is a traditional approach with one longer incision.
- Vaginal hysterectomy is a less-invasive approach with a vaginal incision.
- Laparoscopic hysterectomy involves multiple tiny cuts in the abdomen, and organs are removed through those incisions.
- Laparoscopic-assisted vaginal hysterectomy involves multiple tiny cuts in the abdomen to guide organs out through the vagina.
- Robotic surgery is similar to the laparoscopic approach, however the surgeon uses robotic assistance to make precise surgical movements.

After a hysterectomy, a woman is no longer able to have children and menopause may start (if it hasn't already) when fallopian tubes and ovaries are also removed. For a referral to one of our surgeons, call **(585) 506-4703**.



Hip Resurfacing

An Alternative to Hip Replacement for Some Patients

As the Baby Boomer generation ages, orthopaedic surgeons are seeing early arthritis and joint damage in middle aged adults due to the very activities that have kept them young – sports and exercise.

Doug Hendee was highly active into his 40s – playing lacrosse, running triathlons and teaching fitness classes. But arthritis threatened to take away the things he loved doing.

"At the point I saw Doug, he was having pain pretty much every day," says Christopher Drinkwater, M.D., an orthopaedic surgeon at Highland's Evarts Joint Center and Associate Professor in URMC's Department of Orthopaedics. "Doug had severe degenerative arthritis of the hip. The cartilage of his hip had been destroyed, making movement very painful for him. He was severely restricted in his daily activities."

Total hip joint replacement was one option offered to Doug, but it meant he'd have to restrict his athletic activities post-surgery. In addition to total joint replacements of the knee and hip, Dr. Drinkwater performs another type of surgery, hip resurfacing.

"Hip resurfacing is a fairly new concept," Dr. Drinkwater explains. "It's a specialized procedure within the world of hip surgery, and it has definite advantages for younger, more athletic patients. The number one advantage of hip resurfacing is bone preservation. So, patients who qualify for this option can have a higher level of activity following their procedure."

Replace or Resurface?

Patients with advanced arthritis of the hip may be candidates for either traditional total hip replacement (arthroplasty) or hip resurfacing (hip resurfacing arthroplasty). Each of these procedures is a type of hip replacement, but there are important differences.

An avid athlete, Doug Hendee worried that arthritis in his hip would bring his active lifestyle to a halt. Hip resurfacing corrected the problem and enabled him to keep playing the lacrosse, cycling and other sports that he loves.

At far right, Doug's surgeon, Dr. Christopher Drinkwater, checks Doug's progress following surgery.



In a traditional total hip replacement, the head of the thighbone (femoral head) and the damaged socket (acetabulum) are both removed and replaced with metal, plastic, or ceramic components.

In hip resurfacing, the femoral head is not removed, but is instead trimmed and capped with a smooth metal covering. The damaged bone and cartilage within the socket is removed and replaced with a metal shell, just as in a traditional total hip replacement.

Because the best candidates are healthier to begin with and understand the importance of sticking to a physical therapy regimen, they also may make a quicker recovery.

Things to Consider

Resurfacing is not for everyone. Inflammation, infection and very poor health are some of the factors that might exclude a patient from resurfacing.

As in any major surgery, the expertise and the skill of the surgeon is critical to a good outcome. Patients also need to research both procedures and have a serious discussion with their physician and surgeon. Doug had a very successful recovery and except for running marathons, he's able to do all the athletic activity he enjoys. To see a video about Doug's story and learn more, go to HighlandHospital.org.





Adjusting to Life with a New Baby

Brand new babies may be snuggly and sweet – but it's not all cuddling and cooing in the first few months of life. Parents quickly learn there's a lot of crying, diaper changing, feeding and cleanup involved. Most babies don't "sleep like a baby" on their own. It takes parental effort to soothe, swaddle, and comfort a baby at all hours of the day or night. Newborns need to be fed every two to three hours, so parents are on duty around the clock.

It can all add up to sleep deprivation, fatigue and stress for new parents. You may feel overwhelmed or anxious, or you may miss your carefree life before baby. It's important to set realistic expectations, and gather the support and resources you'll need before you deliver.

Challenges for New Moms

Little rest for the weary. Your body needs to heal after childbirth, especially after a C-section delivery. However, it's not easy to rest and recover with a new baby. Take advantage of the support of Highland's OB nurses and providers during your hospital stay. Highland Hospital's Family Maternity Center staff will demonstrate your baby's first bath in your room and you can watch or assist them, as you feel comfortable. Nurses will also teach baby care, diapering, circumcision care, and personal care and are prepared to assist you with learning how to feed your baby.

Breastfeeding provides numerous health benefits and is a great way for mom and baby to bond. To help families prepare, Highland Family Maternity Center offers prenatal breastfeeding classes. Additionally, lactation consultant support is provided to assist with feedings as needed. After you go home, breastfeeding support is just a phone call away; you can call us at **(585) 341-6808** if you have questions or concerns.

Aches and pains are common when carrying baby, lugging around a heavy car seat, shouldering a diaper bag, etc. Muscle strains happen more easily during pregnancy (and the months after) due to hormones that soften the joints for childbirth. Avoid overdoing it with lifting or repetitive movements.

Baby blues and postpartum depression may affect new moms at any point during their baby's first year of life.

See the box at right for common warning signs, and be sure to ask for help if you need it.

Supermom Secrets

Maintain your own health so you'll have energy for taking care of baby:

- Try to nap when the baby sleeps.
- Eat well to help your body heal.
- Drink plenty of liquids, which is essential for moms in maintaining breast-milk supply.
- Allow time to relax, reconnect with friends and family or just get out of the house for some alone time.

Connecting with other parents is a great way to swap stories and share the joys and challenges of parenthood. Look for a parenting circle or playgroup in your area or join an online community. Check out the classes and tours for families at Highland Hospital at **highlandchildbirthclasses.urmc.edu** or by calling **(585) 473-2229 (BABY)**.

Baby Blues or Postpartum Depression?

It's normal to have mood swings, crying spells and feelings of sadness, anxiety and stress in the weeks and months after giving birth. This is called the baby blues, and for many women these symptoms last a few days or weeks. When depressed feelings last longer or begin to interfere with your ability to function, postpartum depression may be the cause. Signs include:

- Severe mood swings
- Intense irritability/anger
- Feelings of guilt or inadequacy
- Overwhelming fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Insomnia
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

Ask for Help

If you're feeling down, tell someone. Contact your doctor if symptoms become worse or don't go away within two weeks.

Type 2 Diabetes in Children: Know the Warning Signs

Diabetes is one of the most common diseases in school-aged children, according to the National Diabetes Education Program. Of the 19,200 youths diagnosed with diabetes annually between 2002 and 2005, nearly 19 percent of those cases were type 2 diabetes* – a disease that can often be prevented. “As family practitioners, we at Highland Family Medicine are on the frontline of the diabetic epidemic,” says Mathew Devine, D.O. “We check for it much more closely than physicians did a decade ago, and unfortunately we’re diagnosing it much more often in both children and adults.”

What Is Diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes occurs when the immune system destroys the body’s ability to make insulin, a hormone that helps cells absorb glucose – the energy source that fuels the body’s functions – from the foods we eat. The only treatment is to take insulin.

With **type 2 diabetes**, the body still produces insulin, but the cells don’t allow it to work properly. Some people with type 2 diabetes may need to take medication or shots of insulin to control the disease, but many cases can be managed through diet and exercise.

Is Your Child at Risk?

Kids are at an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes if they:

Have a family history of the disease. An estimated 45 to 80 percent of children with type 2 diabetes have at least one parent, a sibling or another close relative with the disease.**

Weigh too much. Being overweight is one of the leading risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Excess fat makes it harder for the body to respond to insulin properly.

Are inactive. Regular exercise helps control weight, prompts the body to use glucose as energy, and may make cells more responsive to insulin.

Belong to one of these ethnic groups: American Indian, Alaska native, African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic/Latino or Pacific Islander.

Signs and Symptoms

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Fatigue
- Thick, dark skin on the neck or under the arms
- Increased hunger
- Weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing or frequent infections

If you’re concerned your child could have diabetes, make an appointment to see a doctor.

How You Can Help Prevent Diabetes

While you can’t change one’s genetic risk for type 2 diabetes, you can make lifestyle changes to help your child maintain a healthy weight and reduce his or her overall risk.

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Mathew Devine, D.O., a family physician, advises parents of diabetic children to adopt healthy eating habits for the entire family.

Maintaining Balance as You Age

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What Causes Balance Problems?

Poor balance and fear of falling can limit seniors' mobility and enjoyment of life. As you age, common disorders such as vision loss, arthritis, inner-ear problems and fewer nerve endings in the feet can worsen your sense of balance.

The part of the inner ear responsible for balance is the labyrinth. To maintain your body's position, the labyrinth interacts with other systems in the body, such as the eyes, bones and joints.

As you get older, you may experience problems with your sense of balance. You may feel dizzy or unsteady, or as if you or your surroundings are in motion. Disturbances of the inner ear are a common cause.

Vertigo, the feeling that you or the things around you are spinning, is also a common symptom.

There are many types of balance disorders. One of the most common is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, or BPPV. In BPPV, you experience a brief, intense feeling of vertigo when you change the position of your head, such as when rolling over to the left or right, upon getting out of bed, or when looking for an object on a high or low shelf. BPPV is more likely to occur in adults age 60 and older but can also occur in younger people.

In BPPV, small calcium particles in the inner ear become displaced and hit the inner ear balance sensors, causing dizziness. The reason they become displaced is not known; the cause may be an inner ear infection, head injury or aging.

Treating and Improving Balance

There are many ways to treat balance disorders. Treatments vary depending on the cause. See your doctor if you are experiencing dizziness, vertigo or other problems with your balance.

Fortunately, balance, like muscle tone, can be maintained and improved, even in later years.

Ways to improve your balance:

- **Keep up with your checkups.** Your physician can identify physical problems affecting your balance and address them before they lead to a serious fall.
- **Be sure your environment is safe.** Make sure your home is well lit; wear good-fitting shoes and beware of loose throw rugs that can trip you up. Keep stairways and walking paths clutter-free. Use handrails and anti-skid devices in bathrooms.
- **Improve muscle strength and flexibility.** To help compensate for declining balance, regular low-impact exercise such as walking and climbing can help you maintain and even improve your sense of balance.
- **Try activities that shift your center of gravity.** Ballroom dancing, tai chi or yoga are relaxing as well as good balance-builders.
- **Find hobbies that help you move.** Even everyday activities such as gardening, which keep you moving and limber, can help.

To read more, and find specific exercises that will improve your balance, go to HighlandHospital.org.





Your physician can identify physical problems affecting your balance and address them before they lead to a serious fall.

Type 2 Diabetes in Children: Know the Warning Signs

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Eat healthy. Provide your child with a variety of healthy food options, including lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Check food labels to ensure items are low in calories and fat. Help your child control portion sizes, and avoid fried foods when possible. Opt for water rather than soda or fruit drinks.

Get active. Encourage your child to try a variety of physical activities to find what he or she enjoys most. It could be joining a sports team, taking dance or martial arts lessons, riding a bike or playing a fitness video game. The options are endless! Aim for 60 minutes of activity every day.

Be healthy together. A healthy diet and regular exercise are good for the entire family, so make it a group effort.

* Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2011.

** Source: KidsHealth.org.

Here If You Need Us

“Type 2 diabetes is often a health concern for the entire family,” Dr. Devine notes. “Care Managers at Highland Family Medicine work closely with diabetic patients to provide information and support; for example, they will sit down with parents and explain in detail how they can ‘count carbs’ in family meals to ensure kids are getting balanced nutrition. There are many computer apps that make it much easier to track what your family is eating.” Call Highland Family Medicine at **(585) 279-4800** if you need a referral to a family physician.

We can help connect families with community resources. Highland Hospital’s Diabetes HealthSource offers adults at risk of diabetes, and those who have the disease, information and tools to be as healthy as possible. If you would like help dealing with diabetes or want to learn more about preventing it, our diabetes education program can provide the assistance you need. Call Diabetes HealthSource at **(585) 341-7066** or visit **HighlandHospital.org** today.

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More than 20 percent of seniors who fall and break their hips will lose their independence permanently. That's why it's so important to learn how to prevent a fall.

Get started with smart prevention with Highland Hospital Geriatric Fracture Center's Fall Prevention Kit. It includes helpful information, a night light (many falls happen as seniors get out of bed at night), a refrigerator magnet with contact numbers and more. Call **(585) 506-4703** to request your free kit.