

Albert Einstein Healthcare Network Performs Region's First Single-Incision Laparoscopic Gastric Banding Surgery

New Procedure Leaves No Visible Scar

Philadelphia, PA, September 8, 2009 – Albert Einstein Healthcare Network (AEHN) announced today that its chief bariatric surgeon successfully performed the Mid-Atlantic region's first laparoscopic gastric banding surgery, which is performed through a single incision in a patient's umbilicus (or belly button), ultimately resulting in the potential for no visible scar. The traditional open laparoscopic surgery requires four or five small incisions to accommodate the laparoscope, various surgical instruments, and catheters. A handful of surgeons like Ramsey Dallal, MD, Chief of Bariatric Surgery at AEHN, are slipping the tools of their trade through a single incision, often with the help of a rubbery "port" appliance that fits into the cut.

According to Dr. Dallal, "the SILS procedure epitomizes minimally invasive surgery. The laparoscope eliminates the need for open surgery and its multiple, long incisions, and no portion of the digestive track is excised."

Thousands of multi-incision laparoscopic gastric banding procedures are performed in the U.S. each year, and the patient is most always left visibly scarred. With the single-incision SILS procedure, patients may never even see evidence of the surgery. Laparoscopic gastric banding achieves weight loss in morbidly obese patients by curbing their food intake. The top portion of the stomach is cinched with an adjustable band, creating a small pouch that quickly fills up with food. Food then passes slowly into the rest of the stomach, supplying nutrition.

Accomplished by using specialized Roticulator™ instruments, manufactured by Covidien, the SILS procedure is performed in surgeries related to gynecologic, bariatric and urologic conditions. That means, in addition to gastric banding, the single-incision SILS procedure can replace the approximately 500,000 multi-incision procedures performed each year in the United States to remove gallbladders.

"At Albert Einstein Healthcare Network, patient care is our highest priority. Whether used for gastric banding or gallbladder removal, procedures including the SILS technique are instrumental in helping us fulfill our goal of offering patients the latest advancements in medicine," says Dr. Dallal. "Patients are thrilled that they can't see a scar, he adds."

While the single-incision procedure is cosmetically superior to the multi-incision version, other clinical comparisons await further research, which Dr. Dallal plans to conduct.

About Albert Einstein Healthcare Network

Albert Einstein Healthcare Network is a 1,200 bed integrated delivery network with nearly 7,500 employees serving the communities of North Philadelphia and Montgomery County, PA. The network's primary location, Albert Einstein Medical Center, is the largest independent academic medical center in the Delaware Valley. The Einstein network also provides a comprehensive range of healthcare services through the Einstein at Elkins Park hospital campus, MossRehab, Belmont Behavioral Health, Einstein at Germantown, Willow Terrace (a nursing home), Willowcrest (a center for subacute care), outpatient facilities such as Center One and Einstein Neighborhood Healthcare, and a network of primary care and specialist practices throughout the community. For more information, visit www.einstein.edu or call 1-800-EINSTEIN.

CONTACT: Rodney J. Yancey

Corporate Communications Manager

215-456-3922

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