

Health Reach

YOUR RESOURCE FOR WELLNESS

KNOWING WHO TO TRUST WHEN YOU HAVE BREAST CANCER

Being diagnosed with breast cancer is emotionally and physically draining. For many patients, that stress is compounded by confusion over where to seek treatment and whom to entrust with their care. Wouldn't it be nice if there were a third-party rating system using clear, evidence-based criteria to identify the best breast centers across the U.S.?

In fact, there is. The American College of Surgeons created the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) to raise the bar and standardize protocols to prevent the uneven cancer care patients so often receive. The Center for Breast Health at Virginia Hospital Center recently became one of the first 23 breast centers nationwide, and the first in Virginia and Washington, DC, to be accredited under the NAPBC.

"It's particularly impressive that the Center for Breast Health at Virginia Hospital Center is one of the first in the nation to be accredited by the NAPBC," said David Winchester, MD, FACS, Medical Director, Cancer Programs, American College of Surgeons and Chair, NAPBC. "The Center has passed a rigorous test, and any patient should feel very comfortable and confident about seeking treatment there."

A symbol of trust, NAPBC accreditation provides assurance for patients that their treatment plan involves top-notch specialists, the latest technologies, strong patient support services, and rigorous clinical standards. At the Center for Breast Health at Virginia Hospital Center, the full range of multidisciplinary services and specialists are offered in one location, so patients are not constantly driving the beltway and hopping from one facility to the next to coordinate the best care.

(Continued on page 2)

Center for Breast Health
first in Virginia and
Washington, DC to receive
NAPBC accreditation.



Breast cancer survivor Jenni Aiello and her family are at the field, ready for baseball season.

KNOWING WHO TO TRUST WHEN YOU HAVE BREAST CANCER *(continued from page 1)*

All specialists at the Center have received advanced training in breast health, including surgeons, breast imagers, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, plastic surgeons, pathologists, physical therapists, breast health educators and breast oncology nurses. Appointments and procedures are scheduled in tandem whenever possible to make treatment more convenient and less time-consuming for patients.

This team approach is integral to the Center's commitment to excellence, says Stephanie R. Akbari, MD, FACS, Medical Director. "In recent years, we've seen an explosion of advances in all areas of breast cancer treatment, from new drug trials and skin-sparing mastectomy to accelerated partial breast irradiation. And with advances in genetic testing, we are now able to detect specific markers that put patients at higher risk for breast cancer. Each specialist on our team has a unique type of expertise and so many more tools now at his or her disposal; we work together to tailor the best course of treatment."

"Communication also is a high priority," Dr. Akbari adds. "We respect our patients' opinions and want them to be informed as part of the decision-making team."

For Centreville resident Jenni Aiello, this approach was life-saving. A fourth generation breast cancer patient, Aiello was first diagnosed at age 39 in 2005 and received a partial mastectomy and chemotherapy at another hospital. In 2006 when follow-up tests revealed a second tumor in her breast that had been left untreated, Aiello sought treatment from Dr. Akbari. She ultimately received a complete mastectomy with reconstructive surgery, and continued to see Dr. Akbari every six months for regular checkups.

"In 2008 when an MRI revealed abnormalities in my other breast, the standard treatment was to wait six months and repeat

the test," says Aiello. "Given my family history, however, Dr. Akbari recommended not waiting. A biopsy showed abnormal cells. To be safe, I opted for a second mastectomy. Three days later the pathology report came back and showed there was cancer. We were both relieved that we didn't wait."

Stress reduction for patients and their families is integral to the Center's healing philosophy. Because the Hospital offers all private rooms with daybeds, Aiello's husband was able to spend the night with her after surgery.

The next day, Dr. Akbari arrived with a special pillow her mom had made by hand. "After a mastectomy, you may have temporary uncomfortable swelling under your arm, and this pillow was just the right size to provide some relief and comfort," Aiello says. "Dr. Akbari is so intelligent, but she also has that ingredient you can't teach—she cares about people. Trust comes when you know your doctor cares about you *and* is a really good doctor."

Aiello also received personalized support from Breast Health Coordinator Jean Sullivan, RN, BSN, who accompanied her to a sentinel node biopsy procedure to determine whether the second cancer had spread to her lymph nodes. "She was a quiet, reassuring presence, and she herself is a survivor," Aiello says. "This was big—having someone with me who knew what I was going through. You know they are looking at the whole patient, not just the cancer."

To learn more about the NAPBC designation, please visit www.napbcatvhc.com. ■

Virginia Hospital Center held a press conference to announce the NAPBC distinction. Pictured with the NAPBC certificate are (R-L) James B. Cole, Hospital CEO; David Winchester, MD, FACS, Chair, NAPBC; Stephanie Akbari, MD, FACS, Medical Director, Center for Breast Health at Virginia Hospital Center; breast cancer survivor, Ms. Nancy Cooley and her son, Tanner Cooley.



"As a son, it was great for me to know my mom was in good hands. You need to have a high level of trust. We had that with Dr. Akbari."

— Tanner Cooley

To view highlights from the press conference, visit www.napbcatvhc.com



When it comes to providing top-notch care, our most important partner is you. Virginia Hospital Center is pleased to introduce "Communication + Education = Empowerment," a series of articles to help you better understand our nation's healthcare system and take charge of your own health.

UNDERSTANDING PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Patient feedback is critical to benchmarking a hospital's performance, and mail surveys are a commonly used tool to obtain that feedback. Virginia Hospital Center is proud to participate in HCAHPS, a national patient engagement survey that produces public rankings of hospital performance. Below is an overview of how the survey benefits both hospitals and their patients.

What Is HCAHPS and What Are Its Benefits to Consumers?

The Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) is a nationwide patient survey developed by the Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services. It's a tool that gives patients the ability to evaluate hospitals using "apples to apples" comparisons.

How Does HCAHPS Work?

Hospital scores are based on a set of standardized criteria designed to measure quality and consistency of patient care. The survey questions address these topics: communication with doctors and nurses, responsiveness of hospital staff, pain management, communication about medicines, discharge information, and cleanliness and quietness of the hospital environment. In addition, the survey asks patients to give an overall hospital rating and their willingness to recommend the hospital.

Who Can Participate?

Individuals who have been admitted as adult inpatients at Virginia Hospital Center may be randomly selected to participate in the survey. It includes 27 questions and takes about 15 minutes to complete. Individuals who have been selected typically receive the mail survey within a week or two of discharge.

How Can I Use HCAHPS to Compare Hospitals in My Area?

Visit www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov. The database will allow you to search by hospital name or zip code, and will allow you to compare scores with two other hospitals.

How Current Are the Scores on the HCAHPS Website?

Because the national survey process takes time, hospital scores typically reflect patient feedback provided six to nine months earlier. For example, results posted on the website in May 2009 may be based on data from August – November 2008.

What Does Virginia Hospital Center Do with Its Survey Results?

Feedback from the community helps us make improvements in order to provide the best patient experience and the best patient outcomes possible. The mail surveys we distribute to our patients include the standard HCAHPS questions, as well as Hospital-specific questions relating to cleanliness, registration, laboratory, radiology and dietary services. The Hospital is able to obtain raw scores on a weekly basis. This allows us to immediately address areas in need of improvement—well before the results of the national study are tallied and posted.



How Can You Help Improve the Healthcare System?

Virginia Hospital Center's expectation is to provide the best patient experience and the best patient outcomes. If you are randomly selected to participate in a HCAHPS survey, please complete the survey and include your own additional comments under each topic so we may better serve you. We want you to feel confident recommending Virginia Hospital Center to family and friends.

An Informed Patient Is an Empowered Patient

Are you looking for ways to take charge of your healthcare? Watch for the fall issue of *HealthReach*, which will explain how to better understand your hospital stay as the last part of this series. ■



FAST ACTION FOR STROKE

When stroke occurs, every minute counts. The longer a person experiencing stroke goes without intervention, the more likely he or she is to sustain permanent brain injury.

“A stroke is essentially a brain attack,” explains neurologist Natalia Kayloe, MD. Like a heart attack, it can have different vascular causes. An ischemic stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted by an arterial blockage. A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when there is bleeding inside the brain due to blood vessel rupture. In either event, the brain is deprived of oxygen, and serious, permanent effects can occur.

Signs of stroke can vary, with consequences ranging from mild to debilitating, depending on which part of the brain is affected and how quickly treatment is received. The following symptoms may appear alone or in combination:

- ◆ Weakness (a decrease in strength) in the face, arm and/or leg, usually on one side of the body. It may be partial or complete—meaning it could occur, for example, in the upper or lower portion of one arm, or in the entire arm.
- ◆ Numbness (a decrease in sensation) in the face, arm and/or leg on one side of the body
- ◆ Inability to understand spoken language
- ◆ Inability to speak or write
- ◆ Vertigo, loss of balance or difficulty walking
- ◆ Loss of vision in one eye, double vision or blurry vision
- ◆ Sudden severe headache

When blood vessels feeding the brain are partially blocked by clots or arterial plaque, a person may experience a transischemic attack (TIA). Symptoms of TIA are similar to those seen in full stroke, but tend to last only a few minutes or hours, and usually go away within 24 hours.

However, signs of TIA should never be ignored. Five percent of individuals experiencing TIA symptoms end up having a major stroke within a week, and as many as 20 percent go on to have a major stroke within three months. One in four full-blown strokes is preceded by TIA.

Evidence of stroke should always be treated as a life-threatening emergency. For many patients, the administration of a tissue plasminogen activator (TPA), a potent blood thinner, may restore blood flow to the affected areas of the brain, preventing further brain damage.

In March, Virginia Hospital Center earned the Gold Seal of Approval™ from The Joint Commission for Primary Stroke Centers in recognition of its outstanding stroke care program. The distinction was received after an on-site review confirmed that the Hospital follows rigorous national standards and treatment guidelines established by the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Stroke Association.

“We were extremely proud to achieve this recognition, as we know that timely diagnosis, access to clot-busting drugs, and special neurointerventional procedures can make a critical difference,” says Dr. Kayloe. “Time-sensitive care ensures that patients have the best chance at a full recovery.”

Stroke is the nation’s third leading cause of death, as well as a leading cause of serious, long-term disability. If you witness a sudden onset of symptoms in a friend or loved one, note the exact time that the symptoms started, and then call 911 or go directly to the emergency department. Every minute counts.

To learn more about stroke, visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com and select Neuroscience under “Medical Services”. ■

ACT F.A.S.T. STROKE IS AN EMERGENCY—EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

FACE



Facial droop, uneven smile?

ARM



Arm or leg numbness or weakness?

SPEECH



Slurred speech, difficulty speaking or understanding?

TIME



Call 911—have the ambulance go to the nearest certified stroke center



Raquel Duarte-Ponce is now able to keep up with her children and new puppy, thanks to life-altering robotic kidney surgery.

About the da Vinci® Surgical System

The da Vinci® system is comprised of several components. A robot next to the patient has four interactive arms and a high-performance camera. The arms hold surgical instruments and are the surgeon's "hands" and the camera is his "eyes". The surgeon sits at a nearby console where he operates controls to move the arms. A computer translates 3-D images to a monitor, allowing the surgeon to visualize the inside of the body with remarkable clarity. In addition to prostate and kidney surgery, the da Vinci is also being used in gynecological surgery at Virginia Hospital Center (see back cover).

To view a video of the da Vinci's components, visit www.washingtonurology.com and click on "Video: da Vinci Surgical System" found on the very bottom right of the home page.

SMALL SURGERY, BIG CHANGE

Robotic technology has revolutionized surgical treatments for a variety of serious medical conditions. For Raquel Duarte-Ponce, it meant not having to live out the rest of her life with debilitating pain and chronic infections.

Shortly after the birth of her first child, Duarte-Ponce was diagnosed with calyceal diverticulum, a rare condition in which narrowing inside the kidney causes a partial blockage. Suffering from chronic, painful urinary tract infections as a result, she underwent surgery intended to remedy the problem, but after two years, the pain resumed. "At that point my urologist told me, 'This is just how it's going to be. You will always have issues,'" she recalls.

Before long, Duarte-Ponce's urinary tract infections were occurring almost constantly, causing stabbing pain. It wasn't until she was referred to Washington Urology, a highly specialized practice using cutting-edge technologies, that she was able to find relief. There, specialists with advanced training in the use of robotics to treat kidney disease offered a different course of treatment.

Using the da Vinci® Surgical System, urologist Robert M. Mordkin, MD removed only the damaged portion of her problem kidney through a series of tiny incisions, leaving the healthy portion of the organ intact.

"Partial kidney removal has been around for a long time, but it was hard to do laparoscopically before the da Vinci," says Dr. Mordkin, a specialist in robotic surgery. "Operating with the robot requires smaller incisions, which decreases the risk of bleeding and produces less scarring. As a result, the recovery time is reduced by 50-65 percent, compared to open surgery. We are always exploring new technologies and minimally-invasive surgical approaches to achieve better outcomes for our patients."

Duarte-Ponce's procedure was performed on a Monday and she was home by Wednesday. Three weeks later she returned to work. "The discomfort was far less than when I had an appendectomy via open surgery," she says.

And the outcome was life-changing. "Up until just a few months ago, my children (now six and eight years) had always known me as sick," says the Lorton resident, now 32. "Now I can pick up my children again, I can exercise, and I feel like a completely different person. It was worth it to get a second opinion from specialists who are using the latest treatments."

To schedule an appointment with Washington Urology, please call 703.717.4200. For more information, visit www.washingtonurology.com. ■

WHO IS READING YOUR MAMMOGRAMS?

Radiology covers a broad gamut of diagnostic imaging, but within the field, there are subspecialties. At Virginia Hospital Center, all breast imaging studies—including mammograms, ultrasounds, MRIs and image-guided biopsies—are evaluated by board-certified radiologists with advanced expertise in breast diagnostics. They include two fellowship-trained breast radiologists, three diagnostic radiologists, and one interventional radiologist with additional training; all of whom are certified per the Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA).

The fact that the Hospital's staff includes dedicated breast imagers is indicative of its exceptionally high standards. The Women's Imaging Center is certified by the American College of Radiology and by the FDA under the MQSA. The Center for Breast Health at Virginia Hospital Center was also recently accredited under the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC), indicating the Center adheres to rigorous protocols for outstanding patient care (see cover story for more details).

"In a typical radiology residency, you receive four months of mammography training," says Sandra A. Polin, MD, who, along with Michelle T. Kladakis, MD, serves as one of two fellowship-trained breast imagers at the Hospital. "Each of us spent an additional specialized year training with some of the top breast imagers in the field."

"I chose breast imaging as my specialty because I enjoy the patient contact," says Polin, who completed her fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. "I wanted to be somewhere where I felt I could make a difference."

Kladakis, who received her fellowship training from Massachusetts General Hospital, espouses a similar philosophy. "In a lot of diagnostics, the patient never talks to the radiologist," she says. "It is very important to us to meet our patients in person to discuss the results of a work-up or



Fellowship-trained breast imagers Sandra A. Polin, MD (left) and Michelle T. Kladakis, MD

biopsy. Most of the time, we end up giving good news and hugs. If not, we discuss what the diagnosis means, what the next step is, and remind them that every day we see patients who had breast cancer five, ten, even fifteen or more years ago and they are doing fantastic."

Diagnosing and treating breast cancer is, however, a multi-step process. The Radiology Scheduling Center works with physicians and patients to schedule imaging appointments and other consultations back-to-back, whenever possible, to make treatment more convenient and less time-consuming.

Once an abnormality is detected, the diagnostic process typically begins with a follow-up mammogram or ultrasound. That study may be followed by MRI or image-guided

biopsy. Armed with the latest technologies, Virginia Hospital Center offers all digital imaging, which makes it easier to track changes between old and new studies. The Women's Imaging Center specializes in stereotactic, ultrasound and MRI-guided biopsies.

When biopsy is recommended, the procedure is scheduled as soon as possible, often the same day. "We understand the anxiety of the patient and work to provide answers as quickly as possible," Polin says.

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in her life. Early detection and treatment are critical. Just ask the 2.5 million breast cancer survivors now living in the U.S. Call 703.558.8500 to schedule a mammogram today. ■

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in her life. Early detection and treatment are critical.

THE PLACE TO GO FOR JOINT REPLACEMENT

Choosing the right hospital for a total hip or knee replacement is no small decision. It's not uncommon for individuals who know they need surgery to put it off—either out of fear of what the procedure and recovery will entail, or because they aren't sure how to pick the best hospital.

But for many DC-area residents, the Center for Joint Replacement at Virginia Hospital Center has been an easy choice. The Center recently received the Gold Seal™ from The Joint Commission for Joint Replacement (hip and knee) Certification in recognition of its high standards. The designation signifies adherence to stringent national protocols for excellence in rehabilitation, pain management and nursing care.

Every member of the team—including surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, OR staff and physical therapists—has special training in orthopedics. All joint replacement surgeries performed at the Center are muscle-sparing, minimally invasive techniques involving small incisions. The result is faster recovery.

“The average length of stay for the 50 or so patients who come here each month for hip or knee replacement is three days,” says Medical Director David W. Romness, MD. “Our pain control protocol is what makes this possible. We use preemptive and multimodal pain care to keep patients comfortable while ensuring the best outcomes.”

Creating a positive experience from beginning to end is a high priority, and patient empowerment is an important part of that equation. Patient education ensures that individuals scheduled for joint replacement know what to expect at every point in the process, from pre-operative screenings, to surgery, to post-op recovery. “Patients also attend a discharge class to make sure they have the utmost confidence about going home,” says Dr. Romness.

To find an orthopedic surgeon at Virginia Hospital Center, visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com



David W. Romness, MD

and click on “Orthopedic Surgery at Virginia Hospital Center”. To learn more about total joint replacement, please register for the Total Joint Replacement class by calling 703.558.6159. ■

INVISIBLE SURGERY

Most abdominal surgeries performed by Surgical Associates at Virginia Hospital Center are done laparoscopically, requiring only three or four tiny incisions. And for some patients, there's an option that is even less invasive.

With single incision laparoscopic surgery (SILS), an entire organ can be removed through one tiny incision in the belly button. Used primarily in cases of appendicitis or gall bladder disease, the procedure has a recovery time equal to conventional laparoscopy and may result in even less post-operative pain. Patients are usually able to leave the hospital the same day and return to work within five days.

“The biggest advantage of all is cosmetic,” says surgeon J.R. Salameh, MD, FACS. “Instead of the traditional four incisions, we can now take out the gallbladder through only one incision hidden in the navel, leaving no visible scars. You can't tell they've had anything done. Laparoscopy was a huge step and now this is another step forward.”

As a new technique, SILS is now used in limited applications, but will likely expand to other kinds of surgeries, such as anti-reflux procedures and weight loss

surgeries. “We try to always be cutting-edge pioneers where there are clear advantages for our patients,” Dr. Salameh says. “Laparoscopy made the idea of surgery less frightening for patients, and now SILS is making surgery even more acceptable. Patients commonly found excuses not to have procedures done, but that's happening less often as our approaches become less invasive.”

Tanika Williams underwent SILS in March and was pleasantly surprised by the results. “I had never had a surgery before and was nervous. I was scared to take off the bandage afterward, but found nothing more than a little scab. Now you can't tell I ever had surgery,” says the 34-year-old Alexandria resident. “I'm ready for bathing suit season already!”

Individuals who have advanced organ disease, are morbidly obese, or have had previous abdominal surgeries may not be candidates for SILS, but may still qualify for conventional laparoscopy.

For more information, contact Surgical Associates at Virginia Hospital Center at 703.717.4250 or visit www.surgicalassociatesvhc.com. ■



Health Talks

MEET THE DOCTOR — GET THE FACTS

These free Health Talks and screenings are led by the region's top doctors, specialists and health professionals. Come and enjoy lively and informative discussions on health issues that affect you.

- ◆ Registration is required and space is limited, so please call early: 703.558.6595.
- ◆ Located in the John T. Hazel, MD Conference Center
- ◆ Free parking in Blue Parking

Thinking about a Baby?

A SPECIAL EVENT FOR PARENTS-TO-BE

Find out why giving birth at Virginia Hospital Center is a very personalized experience.

Saturday, June 20 / 9:30 – 11:30 am

Whether you're considering adding to your family or pre-planning for your first pregnancy, talk to the experts first. A panel of OB/GYNs will discuss how to prepare your body for pregnancy, proper nutrition, and what to expect when you choose to deliver at Virginia Hospital Center. This special event will also include a tour of the recently renovated, state-of-the-art Women & Infant Health Center, including its beautiful all-private patient rooms and NICU with private suites. Afterwards, heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served in the new Women & Infant Health lobby and you will have a chance to meet, greet and ask questions to a host of clinicians including OB/GYNs, certified nurse-midwives, fertility specialists, anesthesiologists and neonatologists. ■

All attendees receive this gift that could double as a tote bag or baby bag.

One bag per couple while supplies last.



Emotional Heart Health

Research has shown that emotional well-being can have a significant effect on physical health. Methods for coping with stress, anger and depression, for example, can have an impact on your risk for coronary disease, cancer and other chronic illnesses. But old habits needn't be a life sentence. Join Dawn Higgins, PhD for a discussion on how family and relationship dynamics can affect emotional wellness, and how improved methods for dealing with conflict can lead to a healthier you. ■

Thursday, June 4 / 6:30 – 8:00 pm



Cardiology & Cardiac Surgery

To register for these FREE discussions, visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com or call 703.558.6271.

DON'T IGNORE LEG PAIN

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD), which affects blood flow in the limbs, is a significant indicator of coronary disease, and a leading cause of reduced mobility in older adults. Interventional cardiologist Charanjit Khurana, MD, FACC, FSCAI answers common questions about PAD and why it shouldn't be ignored:

What Is PAD and How Common Is It?

Peripheral arterial disease occurs when the arteries in the legs develop plaque deposits and become narrower or clogged, thus compromising blood flow. It affects roughly 12 million people in the U.S., although most are unaware that they have it.

Is PAD Serious?

Individuals with PAD also have a 60 to 70 percent chance of having coronary artery disease, and therefore are at higher risk for heart attacks and strokes. Left untreated, PAD can also reduce functional capacities, such as the ability to walk, and lead to amputation in advanced cases.

Are There Symptoms?

Dull cramping in the leg muscles is a common sign. This pain may occur during walking or exercise and subside once activity stops. Other symptoms include fatigue, a feeling of heaviness in the legs, blotchy or shiny skin, and loss of hair on the limbs. If you have symptoms, tell your primary care physician. He or she may refer you to a cardiologist or vascular specialist for testing.

How Is PAD Diagnosed?

The ankle-brachial index (ABI) is a simple, non-invasive test that measures blood pressure in the arms and legs. The ABI can assess the severity of atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the arteries) and predict the risk of future leg problems. Other diagnostic tools may be used to map the location of specific blockages to determine whether or not local therapy is needed.

What Are the Risk Factors?

Smoking, hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes and age place individuals at higher risk for PAD. One in four people over 65 with high blood pressure also has PAD. Certain ethnic groups, including African-Americans and Hispanics, may be at higher risk.

Is PAD Treatable?

Exercise is the best medicine, in that physical activity naturally dilates the arteries to improve blood flow. Eating healthier, quitting smoking, and getting chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol under control (via drugs and/or lifestyle changes) is also recommended. Serious peripheral blockages may warrant interventional treatments such as balloon procedures, stenting, laser therapy, cryotherapy, arthroectomy, or bypass grafts.

Need a primary care physician? Medical Associates of Arlington in Shirlington is accepting new patients. Call 703.717.4245 or visit www.maofarlington.com. ■

Heart & Lung Fitness

Classes are held in the Cardiopulmonary Conference Room at 1625 N. George Mason Drive, First Floor. Please use Blue Parking. Pre-registration is recommended as classes are subject to cancellation.

Low Fat Diet for Cholesterol Reduction & Weight Loss

Discover how diet and exercise can affect both "good" and "bad" cholesterol levels as well as weight.

Thursdays, 5/7 or 6/4, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

How Stress Affects Your Heart Health

Learn to manage stress through relaxation, imagery and breathing techniques.

Thursday, 5/14, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Techniques for Managing Shortness of Breath

Pursed lip breathing and paced breathing are just a few techniques that can help control shortness of breath.

Thursday, 5/21, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Heart Disease & Circulation Problems in the Legs

If you have angina or had heart surgery, you should know risk factors and treatments for circulation problems.

Thursday, 5/28, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Overview of Congestive Heart Failure

Find out the warning signs of heart failure and which medications are most effective.

Thursday, 6/11, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Short of Breath Club

If you suffer from emphysema, bronchitis, asthma or any breathing disorder, join our free, informative lunchtime discussion group. Bring lunch with you or buy it in the Food Court. Family members welcome.

Mondays, 5/18 & 6/15

12:00 – 2:00 pm

John T. Hazel, MD Conference Center, Room C



Oncology

PROSTATE SURGERY WITHOUT THE KNIFE

Surgery has long been the gold standard and remains a viable treatment for patients with prostate cancer. For individuals with low- to intermediate-risk tumors who are unable to tolerate surgery, or who wish to consider other options, CyberKnife® Stereotactic Radiosurgery offers an alternative.

Often described as “surgery without the knife,” CyberKnife is a new procedure that uses external beam radiation to deliver a very high dose of radiation to the tumor with extreme precision. Because the margins are extremely small, healthy tissue in adjacent organs is spared, causing less trauma and potentially fewer side effects than conventional radiation. This can be especially advantageous for prostate cancer patients, given the prostate’s sensitive location. A robotic tracking system used during treatment follows the exact location of the tumor and adjusts in real time to account for internal body movement.

“Patients who are candidates for both surgery and CyberKnife now have a choice,” says radiation oncologist Robert L. Hong, MD. “Various factors may weigh into the decision, including age, PSA levels, Gleason scores and urinary symptoms.”

“Each approach may have different side effects,” he adds. “For example, surgery sometimes affects urinary continence. Traditional radiation tends to cause more rectal irritation, although early evidence suggests that CyberKnife may result in fewer side effects because the dose is so targeted.”

When Dr. Robert Hudson, 69, a practicing pediatrician in Washington, DC, was diagnosed with low-risk prostate cancer, his first choice was to undergo robotic prostatectomy. After surgery was unsuccessful, however, Hudson was referred by his urologist to Dr. Hong for external beam radiotherapy. He completed his CyberKnife treatments in just five days.

“It would have been difficult for me to give up two hours a day (including treatment and travel time) for the eight weeks required for traditional radiation. CyberKnife treatment fit well with my busy schedule,” Dr. Hudson says, noting no side effects other than slight fatigue. “I live in Silver Spring and had no problem driving myself to treatment every day. I was finished in a week.” Shortly thereafter, his PSA levels dropped from 4 to 1.

“CyberKnife is new and exciting,” Dr. Hong says of the procedure, which received FDA approval for prostate treatment in 2004. “We are participating in a clinical trial that will tell us more about its benefits and how the side effects may differ from conventional radiation treatments.” ■



Clinical Trial for CyberKnife® Treatment of Prostate Cancer

Virginia Hospital Center is committed to providing quality care that ensures the best outcomes for its patients, while advancing medicine in general. In recognition of its leading expertise in the field of prostate oncology, the Hospital has been approved to participate in a National Phase II prospective evaluation of CyberKnife Stereotactic Radiosurgery for low- and intermediate-risk prostate cancer. Virginia Hospital Center is the only hospital in northern Virginia enrolling into this trial. Individuals recently diagnosed with low- or intermediate-risk prostate cancer may be candidates for trial participation. To find out more, call 703.558.6284.



CANCER PROGRAM HONORED

As further evidence of Virginia Hospital Center’s outstanding reputation in cancer care, the Hospital is the proud recipient of the 2008 Commission on Cancer Outstanding Achievement Award.

Established in 2004, the award is given after an on-site evaluation confirms program compliance with stringent high standards in leadership, data management, clinical services, research, community outreach and quality improvement.



All programs and support groups are held in the Cancer Resource Center in the Rose Benté Lee Ostapenko Outpatient Oncology Center unless otherwise noted. Please use Green Parking. To register for these free programs, visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com or call the number indicated. For more information, call 703.558.5555.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Spring/Summer Lectures & Events

Pre-Op Class for Breast Surgery Patients

Jean Sullivan, RN, BSN, Breast Health Coordinator, gives a virtual tour of surgical rooms, reviews surgical procedures and explains how to manage dressings and drains. To register, call 703.558.6908.

Tuesday, 5/19 or 7/21, 6:00 – 7:00 pm
Friday, 6/12 or 8/14, 10:00 – 11:00 am

Lymphedema Awareness

Learn about lymphedema caused by cancer treatment from certified lymphedema specialists. To register, call 703.558.0911.

Tuesday, 5/19 or 7/21, 7:00 – 8:00 pm
Friday, 6/12 or 8/14, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Us Too/Man to Man Prostate Cancer

A panel of prostate cancer survivors, representing different treatment options, discusses their treatment and answers questions from the audience. To register, call 703.558.0912.

Tuesday, 5/26, 7:00 – 8:00 pm
Hazel Conference Center

Look Good, Feel Better

Learn makeup and hair styling techniques to help manage changes in your appearance that may occur during cancer treatment. To register, call 703.558.5555.

Monday, 6/1 or 8/3, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Living Well After Cancer

In this four-week program, a physician, psychiatrist, nutritionist, physical therapist and social worker discuss long-term medical management, exercise and coping with stress after treatment has been completed. To register, call 703.558.0909.

Thursdays, 7/9, 7/16, 7/23 & 7/30
7:00 – 8:30 pm

Coping with Chemo Brain

Donna Hafner, RN, OCN discusses symptoms of chemo brain and methods for coping with cognitive deficits associated with chemotherapy treatment. To register, call 703.558.0902.

Wednesday, 8/5, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Breast Cancer Update

Neelima Denduluri, MD, medical oncologist, discusses what is new from the latest American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. To register, call 703.558.0910. Thursday, 8/20, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Complementary Lecture Series

Tai Chi Workshop

Maiky Tran, Tai Chi head instructor, presents six Tai Chi classes for cancer patients. To register, call 703.558.0908.

Mondays, 6/1, 6/8, 6/15, 6/22, 6/29 & 7/6, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Healing & Renewal Through Centering Prayer

Edward Bauman, PhD, chaplain and TV/radio personality, shows how contemplative prayer can be a source of healing renewal. To register, call 703.558.0913. Wednesday, 6/17, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Just Dance

A fun-filled class of Latin, Persian, Broadway and jazz dancing will make you forget the "work" in "workout". To register, call 703.558.0918. Thursday, 6/25, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Healing Power of Music

Martha Hamilton, musician and breast cancer survivor, shows how music can help express your emotions, culminating in a drumming circle. No musical experience needed. To register, call 703.558.0917. Tuesday, 7/14, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

FREE SCREENINGS (Registration Required)

Skin Screening

Dermatologists will do free skin examinations. To register, call 703.558.0958. Saturday, 6/20, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Rose Benté Lee Ostapenko Outpatient Oncology Center

Cervical Screening

OB/GYNs perform free PAP smears. To register, call 703.558.0957. Saturday, 7/11, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Outpatient Clinic

Early Stage Breast Cancer Support Group

Women share concerns and learn new coping techniques.

1st & 3rd Tuesday / 5:00 – 6:30 pm
2nd & 4th Tuesday / 6:00 – 7:30 pm

Write Away Group

Aspiring writers with cancer share what they have written about diagnosis, treatment and survivorship. Call 703.558.6913 for dates and times.

Healing Through Art

Participants learn how to use art media to cope with a cancer diagnosis. To register, call 703.558.5555.

3rd Wednesday / 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Recurrent/Metastatic Cancer Support Group

For those with any type of cancer diagnosis. To register, call 703.558.5555.

2nd & 4th Wednesday
1:00 – 2:30 pm

Us Too/Man to Man: Prostate Cancer Support Group

Discussion group for men and their spouses or significant others.

4th Tuesday / 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Reiki

Enjoy a free half-hour of Reiki, a gentle, non-invasive form of healing. By appointment only. Call 703.558.6284.

2nd Friday of every month

Lymphoma Support Group

For persons diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease or non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

4th Wednesday
4:00 – 5:30 pm





Women & Infant Health

A PLEASANT BIRTHING EXPERIENCE

Having a baby is an extremely meaningful and life-changing event. Virginia Hospital Center believes every patient should have the kind of birth experience she wants, and that personalized, hands-on planning is an important part of providing exceptional care. Your physician will work with you to outline your vision for labor and delivery ahead of time, including preferences regarding pain management, style of delivery, and family member involvement. Discussing these options upfront helps ease anxiety and lays the groundwork for a smoother delivery.

“We spend a lot of time getting to know our patients during prenatal care visits—listening to their concerns, answering their questions, and educating them,” says Andrea Williams, MD, Vice President of the Department

of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Many OB/GYN practices often have a nurse practitioner involved in providing prenatal care. For example, nurse practitioner Kristen Sheridan works with Dr. Williams and the three other female OB/GYNs in that practice to provide prenatal care for low-risk patients. As a former labor and delivery nurse, she brings added insight to patients about what to expect during labor.

“We like delivering at Virginia Hospital Center in an environment that is laid back and personal, but backed by the latest technology and any specialists you might need,” adds Dr. Williams. “It’s the perfect combination of both worlds.”

Patients at Virginia Hospital Center may choose to give birth with one of 63 OB/GYNs, or with a certified nurse-midwife. Certified nurse-midwives are registered nurses who have completed graduate level training in midwifery and passed a national certification exam. The term midwife, which literally translates as “with woman,” reflects the nurturing role that certified nurse-midwives play as a complement to the medical and surgical expertise provided by OB/GYNs.

Karen King, a certified nurse-midwife with more than 20 years of experience in maternal child/health, is present with the patient throughout the entire birth process. “The OB/GYN is always five minutes away in case of complications, such as situations requiring forceps or a Cesarean-section,” King says.

Per Hospital protocol, an OB/GYN is always present in the facility during labor and delivery to ensure patient safety and to step in if problems arise.

When Arlington resident Jennifer Phelps became pregnant, she knew she wanted to try to give birth naturally, with as few medical interventions as possible.

“When I found out Karen was going to be with me the whole time, that made my decision,” says Phelps, who has continued to see King for follow-up GYN exams since the birth of her son, Grant Jacob, last November. “Building a relationship with her was priceless to me, and she was very clear about what our choices were. Even though things turned out differently from what I had expected (I did not envision needing pitosin or an epidural), it was okay because I trusted her completely. I was very happy with the delivery. It was a very personal experience.”

Visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com to find an OB/GYN that delivers at Virginia Hospital Center. Select Obstetrics & Gynecology under “Find a Doctor”. ■

New mom Jennifer Phelps and Grant Jacob with certified nurse-midwife Karen King



JUNE 20th

Thinking about a baby? Come to our special event for parents-to-be. See page 8.



Childbirth Education Classes

Preparation for Childbirth (Six-Week Class)

This six-session class for expectant parents covers pregnancy through the postpartum period, including nutritional needs; breathing and relaxation techniques; Cesarean deliveries; medication during labor; signs of labor; postpartum physical and emotional changes. Includes preparation for breastfeeding, infant care skills and a tour of the Women & Infant Health Center.

Tuesdays, 6/2 – 7/7

Wednesdays, 6/3 – 7/1 or 7/22 – 8/26

7:30 – 9:30 pm / Cost: \$160 (C)

Saturday Preparation for Childbirth Class

This one-day class for expectant parents covers pregnancy through the postpartum period, including nutritional needs; breathing and relaxation techniques; Cesarean deliveries; medication during labor; signs of labor; postpartum physical and emotional changes. Tour the Women & Infant Health Center.

5/16, 6/27, 7/11, 7/18 or 8/22

9:00 am – 5:30 pm / Cost: \$140 (C)

Infant Care Skills

Expectant and adoptive parents learn about nursery needs, infant safety and growth and development. Includes a lecture by a pediatrician.

Thursday, 6/25 or 8/27

7:00 – 9:30 pm / Cost: \$50 (C)

Sibling Class

The sibling class helps children, ages 2-6, adjust to their mother's stay in the Hospital and the addition of a new sibling. Children have an opportunity to properly hold and diaper a life-like doll and tour the Postpartum Unit and Nursery.

Saturday, 6/13 or 7/11

9:30 am for 2-3 years or

10:30 am for 4-6 years

Cost: \$20 (L)

Hospital Tour for Expectant Parents

Tours of Labor, Delivery and Recovery, Nursery and Postpartum Units are offered for adults only. Free of charge, but registration is required.

Sundays, 5/17, 5/31, 6/7, 6/14, 6/28, 7/12, 7/26, 8/2, 8/9 or 8/23

2:00 pm (L)

Preparation for Breastfeeding

Learn about nipple and breast care, sleep and awake states of the baby, breastfeeding for working mothers, and breast pumps. Coaches welcome.

Thursday, 5/28 or 7/23

7:00 – 9:30 pm / Cost: \$40 (C)

Breastfeeding Support Group

A weekly support group to provide encouragement and education to the newly breastfeeding mom. Share your concerns with a registered nurse. An infant scale is available for weight checks. Free of charge, but registration is required.

Wednesdays, 12:00 – 1:00 pm (L)

New Parents Support Group

Join other new parents two mornings a month to share your parenting experiences. Babies welcome! Free of charge, but registration is required.

Wednesdays, 5/20, 6/3, 6/17

10:30 am – 12:00 pm (L)

Postpartum Support Group

Talk with other new mothers who are finding the postpartum weeks overwhelming. If you are feeling sad, anxious, angry or irritable, group support can help. Babies welcome! Free of charge, but registration is required.

Wednesdays, 5/13, 6/10, 6/24, 7/8, 7/22, 8/12, 8/26

10:30 am – 12:00 pm (L)

Heart Saver CPR

The American Heart Association Heart Saver CPR course explains how to give CPR in a safe, timely and effective manner to an adult, child or infant. Recommended for expectant parents and new parents. To register, call 703.558.6970 or visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com.

Saturday: 5/2, 6/6, 7/18 or 8/1, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Monday: 5/11, 6/15, 7/13 or 8/10, 6:00 – 10:00 pm

Cost: \$55 per person (C)



WHEN TO REGISTER FOR CHILDBIRTH CLASSES

Sign up for Childbirth Education Classes in your first through fourth month of pregnancy

To register, visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com or call 703.558.2468

CLASS LOCATIONS

(C) = John T. Hazel, MD Conference Center

(L) = Women & Infant Health Lobby Classroom
1701 N. George Mason Drive





Health Promotion

To register, please fill out the registration form or visit www.virginiahospitalcenter.com and click on "Programs & Classes".

ALL SESSIONS ARE 6 WEEKS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. For more information on Health Promotion classes, call 703.558.6740.

Body Sculpting

Tone your upper & lower body using resistance bands, bars & tubing.

Mon 6:00 – 6:45 pm begins 5/18 & 7/13 (H)
Wed 6:00 – 6:45 pm begins 5/20 & 7/15 (H)
Sat 11:00 – 11:45 am begins 5/30 & 7/18 (CS)
\$42

Cardio For All Sizes

Have fun getting fit with this low-impact, healthy exercise class.

Sat 10:00 – 10:45 am begins 5/30 & 7/18 (CS)
\$42

Nordic Walking **NEW!**

Adding poles burns 20 percent more calories without added exertion & takes stress off the joints. Poles provided. For all fitness levels. *4-week session.

Wed 7:15 – 8:15 pm begins 5/20 (CS)
Fri 7:30 – 8:30 am begins 7/24 (CS)
\$50

Cardio Strength Circuit

Work at your own intensity level at a series of stations designed to improve cardiovascular & muscular strength & endurance.

Tues 5:30 – 6:15 pm begins 5/19 & 7/14 (H) \$42

Yoga for Everybody

This gentle traditional approach to yoga reduces stress & increases strength & flexibility.

Wed 6:30 – 8:00 pm begins 5/20 & 7/15 (CS) \$66

Gentle Yoga

Restore flexibility, regain strength & ease tensions. For all levels & abilities.

Tues 9:30 – 11:00 am begins 5/19 & 7/14
Thurs 9:30 – 11:00 am begins 5/21 & 7/16 (CS) \$66

Adaptive Yoga

For those dealing with MS, neuropathy and other conditions, gentle yoga postures & relaxation can ease pain & improve well-being.

Tues 11:30 – 12:45 pm begins 5/19 & 7/14 (CS) \$66

Cardiac Yoga **NEW!**

A gentle yoga class designed for cardiopulmonary patients & individuals looking for ways to manage stress. 8-week session.

Tues 7:00 – 8:00 pm begins 5/19 (H) \$88

Hatha Yoga

Tues 12:00 – 1:00 pm begins 5/19 & 7/14
Thurs 6:00 – 7:15 pm begins 5/21 & 7/16 (H) \$66

Prenatal Partner Yoga

Bond with your partner as you learn restorative postures designed to help ease the discomfort of pregnancy. 1 session.

Sun 2:00 – 3:30 pm, 6/21 (H) \$40/couple

Prenatal Yoga

Stretch muscle groups essential for efficient labor & delivery.

Physician approval required.

Mon 7:00 – 8:00 pm begins 5/18 & 7/13 (H)
Tues 10:45 – 11:45 am begins 5/19 & 7/14 (H)
Tues 6:15 – 7:15 pm begins 5/19 & 7/14 (CS)
Wed 7:00 – 8:00 pm begins 5/20 & 7/15 (H)
Sat 10:00 – 11:00 am begins 5/30 & 7/18 (H)
Sun 11:15 – 12:15 pm begins 5/31 & 7/19 (H)
\$78

Postpartum Yoga **NEW!**

Regenerate strength & balance after childbirth.

Sun 12:30 – 1:30 pm begins 5/31 & 7/19 (H) \$78

Postpartum Pilates

Get back into shape after childbirth!

Fri 11:15 am – 12:15 pm begins 5/22 & 7/17*
Sat 11:00 am – 12:00 pm begins 5/30 & 7/18*
*(Fridays Mom & baby/Saturdays Moms only)
(H) \$78

Gentle Pilates

Start with this class to learn proper Pilates form.

Sat 9:00 – 10:00 am begins 5/30 & 7/18 (H) \$78

Pilates

Mon 7:30 – 8:30 pm begins 5/18 & 7/13 (CS)
Wed 7:30 – 8:30 am begins 5/20 & 7/15 (H)
\$78

Advanced Pilates

Previous experience required.

Mon 6:15 – 7:15 pm begins 5/18 & 7/13 (CS) \$78

Pi-Yo

Tone with this blend of Pilates strengthening & Yoga movement.

Tues 7:30 – 8:30 pm begins 5/19 & 7/14 (CS)
Thurs 7:30 – 8:30 pm begins 5/21 & 7/16 (H)
\$78

Tai Chi for Beginners

Improve balance, strength & calmness. 8-week session.

Thurs 6:15 – 7:15 pm begins 5/21 (CS) \$72

Tai Chi **NEW!**

Simplified, 24-posture Yang style. 8-week session.

Thurs 7:30 – 8:30 pm begins 5/21 (CS) \$72

FAMILY FITNESS

Itsy Bitsy Yoga® for Babies

Learn yoga postures to support baby's developing body (6 weeks to almost crawling).

Wed 9:15 – 10:00 am begins 5/20 & 7/15
Fri 10:00 – 10:45 am begins 5/22 & 7/17
Sat 2:30 – 3:15 pm begins 5/30 & 7/18 (H) \$78

Tykes Yoga

Enjoy a flow of poses, songs & games to enhance the parent/child bond (21 months to 4 years).

Mon 10:45 – 11:30 am begins 5/18 & 7/13 (H) \$78

Itsy Bitsy Yoga® for Tots

Fun-loving yoga class for parent & toddler (active crawling to 24 months).

Mon 9:45 – 10:30 am begins 5/18 & 7/13
Sat 3:30 – 4:15 pm begins 5/30 & 7/18 (H) \$78

Family Fun Yoga **NEW!**

Bring your family together for an energizing yoga class. All children & family members welcome.

1 session.
Fri 6:00 – 7:00 pm, 5/29 or 6/5 (H) \$15



(H) = Virginia Hospital Center
(CS) = Carlin Springs Health Pavilion at 601 S. Carlin Springs Road, Arlington

SENIOR HEALTH PROGRAMS

For more information, call 703.558.6859.

“Quit for Good” Smoking Cessation

Conquer the 3 aspects of smoking: addiction, habit & psychological dependency. *5 sessions.*

Mon & Wed 7:15 – 8:15 pm begins 6/17 (H) \$50

Massage for Couples

Learn the benefits & techniques of massage in this hands-on workshop.

Sat 7/11 9:30 am – 12:00 pm (CS) \$45 / couple

Healthy Baking

Learn to make delicious baked goods with reduced cholesterol & saturated fats.

Wed 6/3 6:30 – 8:30 pm (H) \$45

HealthWorks

Bring customized health promotion programs, health fairs and wellness classes on-site to your business. Call 703.558.6740.

One on One Assessments

For an appointment, call 703.558.6740.

Body Fat Analysis

Using high-tech equipment, we assess your percentage of fat, muscle and water. Learn how many calories you burn doing various activities. \$15

Dermascan

Non-invasive black-light scanning device which examines head and neck for potential or existing sun damage. \$10

Bone Density Screening

Osteoporosis risk assessment screening using p-DEXA scan of the forearm. \$35

Metabolism Screening

Determine your resting metabolic rate, the number of calories you burn at rest, using the MedGem® indirect calorimeter. This is an important measure in assessing nutritional needs and helping you achieve weight management goals. \$55

Fingerstick Cholesterol Screening

Total Cholesterol & HDL \$19, Total Cholesterol, HDL, LDL & Lipids \$23

Total Cholesterol, HDL, LDL, Lipids & Glucose \$25

Hypothyroidism Screening

Fingerstick blood test \$25

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

3rd Wed of every month from 10:30 – 11:30 am (CS)

Strength Training for Seniors

Improve range of motion, muscle strength & bone health. *6-week sessions.*

Mon 1:00 – 1:45 pm begins 5/18 & 7/13 (H) \$42

Seniorcise

Maintain & regain strength & flexibility. *10-week sessions.*

Mon/Wed/Fri 9:15 – 10:15 am, Arlington Forest Methodist Church or McLean Baptist Church. \$70

Mon/Wed 10:30 – 11:30 am

Calvary Methodist Church, Crystal City. \$47

Classes start Mon 6/29

Walk on the Mild Side

Get active & meet other seniors at this free walking program.

Tues/Thurs 8:00 – 9:00 am

Ballston Common Mall

Lifeline

At the touch of a button, our 24-hour emergency response system alerts a Lifeline operator when you need help. Call 703.558.6859.

HEALTHY AGING SERIES

Planning for the Unexpected

Important lessons from care manager Judy Grumbly, RN, MSN, ANP with Care Options.

Friday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm 5/29 (CS)

Skin Care Through the Golden Years

Courtney Herbert, MD, Dermatologist

Friday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm 6/19 (CS)

Diabetes, Osteoporosis, Thyroid & Other Endocrine Disorders

Caroline Huang, MD, Endocrinologist

Friday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm 7/17 (CS)

Medication Management

Sharon Grant, PharmD from Preston's Pharmacy

Friday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm 8/21 (CS)

Health Promotion & Senior Health Registration Form

Complete this form and mail to Health Promotion Department, Virginia Hospital Center, 1701 N. George Mason Drive, Arlington, VA 22205-3698; or fax to 703.558.2456. Checks should be made payable to Virginia Hospital Center. You will receive a confirmation with directions. Parking tokens provided. For more details, call 703.558.6740.

Program Name

Program Date

Amount Enclosed

Name

Daytime Phone

Email Address

Address

Credit Card #

Visa Mastercard
 Amex Discover

Exp. Date

Signature

James B. Cole
President & CEO

R. Michael Amedeo, MD
President, Medical Staff

HealthReach is produced by the
Division of Public Affairs &
Marketing for the communities
served by Virginia Hospital Center.

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Each person's health status is unique. The
information offered in HealthReach is general
in nature. Your personal healthcare provider
is your best source of medical advice.

EXPERTS IN ROBOTIC GYN SURGERY

Women in the Washington, DC area lead hectic lives, juggling the demands of career, family, and community. It's not uncommon for even the fittest among them to develop medical conditions requiring pelvic surgery as they age. But who has the time for surgery, followed by a lengthy recovery?

At Virginia Hospital Center, women are no longer faced with the choice of taking care of their own health at the expense of their professional and personal lives. Thanks to the diversity of the da Vinci[®] Surgical System, robotic GYN surgeries are less invasive and less time-consuming. And thanks to Maria P. Canter, MD, MSc, FACOG and Luis E. Sanz, MD, FACOG, professor at Georgetown University School of Medicine, robotic GYN and urogynecologic surgery is available to patients by two of the region's foremost surgeons with specialized training in robotic surgery.

A common surgery that thousands of women undergo each year is hysterectomy. Some have complicating factors

such as prolapse, a condition in which weakened pelvic muscles cause one or more organs to drop. In such instances, hysterectomy may be accompanied by reconstructive surgery, using mesh to reset prolapsed organs in their proper position. With the da Vinci, this entire sequence can be performed through a series of button-hole sized incisions.

"For patients, this translates into less surgical trauma, pain, bleeding and scarring—and a faster recovery," explains Dr. Canter, the only female physician in northern Virginia to have completed a three-year fellowship in urogynecology.

Whereas patients undergoing traditional open surgery can expect a hospital stay of two to four days and a recuperation period of six to eight weeks, those undergoing GYN robotic surgery usually go home the next day.

"If their occupations are not strenuous, some are back at work in as little as two weeks," says Dr. Sanz, author of four textbooks and more than 40 journal articles on gynecologic surgery.

As ex-Vice Chairman and Division Chief of Urogynecology and Gynecologic Surgery at Georgetown University School of Medicine, Dr. Sanz received a 2008 Award of Honor for outstanding contributions to medicine and the university by the Georgetown Clinical Society.

"I've never seen anything like robotic GYN surgery—patients come in for their follow-up visit after a few weeks and they feel great," Dr. Canter adds. "Patients don't feel like they've had major reconstructive surgery and we have to caution them not to overdo it."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Sanz or Dr. Canter, call 703.717.4000 or visit www.urogynecologycenter.com. ■

