



Robot Sacrocolpopexy

Written by Emily King

There is an issue affecting 25% of women in their forties and 33% of women in their sixties in the United States and you may have never even heard of it: pelvic organ prolapse. Like so many aspects of women's health, women may feel embarrassed to talk about it or mention it to their doctor. Bringing gynecological issues like pelvic organ prolapse into the spotlight can help women recognize the issues in themselves and hopefully remove the shame and embarrassment of talking about it.

Pelvic organ prolapse (POP) occurs when the pelvic muscles are no longer strong enough to hold up the pelvic organs. The pelvic muscles act as a hammock that hold up the organs in the area, which include the bladder, uterus, cervix, vagina, and rectum. When the muscles are weak or damaged, these organs can drop or bulge into the vagina.

The symptoms of POP can be a feeling of pressure or fullness in the vagina. Sometimes the prolapse can be seen. The pressure may get worse with standing, coughing or as the day goes on. Many women report pain with physical activity.

Age is a leading risk factor and POP becomes more common as women age. Childbirth, constipation, and chronic cough can also increase a woman's risk.

There are several treatment options for POP. Many women start with pelvic floor therapy, or a device called a pessary, which is inserted in the vagina to provide symptom relief. Surgery is also an option for some women.

Dr. Anne Roslonski DO is an obstetrics and gynecology specialist at Washington Health System OB/GYN Care. She uses state-of-the-art robotic-assisted surgery to treat POP in her patients and get women back to living their lives without discomfort.

The surgery that Dr. Roslonski performs is called a robotic sacrocolpopexy.

"A robotic sacrocolpopexy is a surgery performed to replace the vagina in its original anatomic and functional position," says Dr. Roslonski.

During the surgery, a Y-shaped piece of mesh is sewn onto the anterior and posterior vagina. It is also attached to the sacrum, a bony area at the bottom of the spinal column. This pulls up the tissue and moves the organs back into their correct position. By using robotic tools to perform the surgery, it only requires a few small incisions on the abdomen. Traditional surgery is more invasive with a longer recovery time.

"There are many advantages to robotic surgery. The camera on the da Vinci robot allows for 3-D visualization of the surgical field. The view of the anatomy is greatly enhanced using the robotic camera," says Dr. Roslonski. She goes on to explain that the robot has "wrists" which allows for precise cuts and suturing. Patients experience less postoperative pain and quicker recovery time with robotic surgery.

"Because the tissue takes time to heal, the patient will need to take it easy for about two months. After about two weeks, women usually feel pretty good," says Dr. Roslonski. "Women usually feel 'back to themselves' after about six weeks."

Any surgery comes with risks, including the risks associated with going under anesthesia. However, it is a relatively safe procedure. Dr. Roslonski urges women to be as healthy as possible for surgery by stopping smoking and addressing any other medical conditions.

If you are experiencing pelvic organ prolapse, your doctor can talk to you about your options for treatment, including surgery.

If you would like to make an appointment with Dr. Roslonski, call WHS OB/GYN Care at (724) 225-3640.


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