The Condition:
Thyroid Cancer

Diagnosis?
Learn why da Vinci® Surgery may be your best treatment option

Your thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of your neck. Using the essential nutrient iodine, your thyroid produces hormones that regulate every aspect of your metabolism—from your heart rate to how quickly you burn calories.

Worldwide, thyroid cancer affects 123,000 people a year and this number is expected to rise. Women are affected by this disease more than men. It is usually diagnosed between ages of 30 and 50. Fortunately, when caught early, most thyroid cancer responds well to treatment.

The exact cause of thyroid cancer is unknown, and there are few known risk factors. However, the disease is more common where iodine consumption is very low and in adults with a history of head or neck radiation.

Thyroid cancer is often diagnosed after lumps are found by the patient or during a routine exam. Other symptoms may include: pain that extends to the ears, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, breathing problems and a persistent and unexplained cough.

OU Medicine is Oklahoma’s leader in providing da Vinci robotic surgery, offering treatments options in many different adult and pediatric specialties. To learn more about this and other da Vinci surgeries, visit: www.OUrobotics.com.
The Treatment: Thyroid Surgery

Your doctor will discuss treatment options with you in detail. Generally, treatments include: surgery, radioactive iodine treatment, thyroid hormone therapy, external beam radiation, or chemotherapy. Treatment plans often use two or more of these options, but surgery is the main treatment for all thyroid cancers.1

If you have a cancerous or potentially cancerous lesion, your doctor will most likely perform a thyroidectomy - removal of the thyroid gland. The size and location of the nodule will determine whether a thyroidectomy or thyroid lobectomy - removal of only part of the thyroid - is the best option.

For cancers smaller than 1 cm (½ inch) that show no signs of spreading, surgeons may remove only the affected side.1 When cancer has spread outside the thyroid, surgery is also used to remove nearby lymph nodes.

The two traditional surgical options for thyroid cancer are open and endoscopic surgery. Open surgery is considered effective but requires a 3.5 - 8 cm (1.4 - 3 inches) or larger incision in the neck, which can leave a visible scar.4 Also, the view into deeper structures of the neck containing delicate nerves is limited.6

Endoscopic thyroidectomy is minimally invasive and may be effective for selected patients, but it can also leave visible scarring; multiple, smaller incisions are used, with the largest being 1.5 - 3 cm (0.6 - 1.2 inches).1,3

One of the potential complications of thyroid surgery is voice change. Also, if most or all of your thyroid gland is removed, you will need to take daily thyroid hormone medication.7

If your doctor recommends surgery to treat thyroid cancer, you may be a candidate for a safe, effective and minimally invasive procedure – da Vinci Surgery. Using the most advanced technology available, the da Vinci System enables your doctor to perform this delicate operation with breakthrough precision.

da Vinci provides your surgeon with superior vision, precision, dexterity and improved access. As a result, the visible scarring associated with traditional open surgery is avoided. da Vinci Surgery offers thyroid cancer patients numerous potential benefits over traditional open surgery, including:

- Superior cosmetic outcomes5,6
- No neck scars4,5
- Avoids laryngeal nerve injury5

As with any surgery, these benefits cannot be guaranteed, as surgery is patient- and procedure-specific.

The Enabling Technology: da Vinci Surgical System

The da Vinci Surgical System is designed to provide surgeons with enhanced capabilities, including high-definition 3D vision and a magnified view. Your doctor controls the da Vinci System, which translates his or her hand movements into smaller, more precise movements of tiny instruments inside your body.

Though it is often called a “robot,” da Vinci cannot act on its own. Instead, the surgery is performed entirely by your doctor. Together, da Vinci technology allows your doctor to perform complex procedures through just a few tiny openings. As a result, you may be able to get back to life faster without the usual recovery following major surgery.

The da Vinci System has been used successfully worldwide in hundreds of thousands of procedures to date.

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