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First time at Bridgeport Hospital: Single-incision gallbladder surgery

The first single-incision laparoscopic surgery (SILS) to remove a gallbladder at Bridgeport Hospital was recently performed by surgeon Andrew Kenler, MD. The innovative procedure is done through the belly button using smaller, more flexible surgical instruments than the ones used for traditional laparoscopic surgery. As a result, scarring from the procedure is reduced—and in some cases completely hidden.

“The main advantage of SILS is cosmetic—scars are barely visible, if at all,” explains Dr. Kenler. “SILS retains all the other advantages of minimally invasive surgery for the patient, such as a shorter hospital stay, less post-operative discomfort and a faster recovery.”

Gallbladder removal using the SILS approach involves just one 20-millimeter incision (about three-quarters of an inch), compared with up to four, half-inch incisions in traditional laparoscopic gallbladder extraction. Known clinically as a cholecystectomy, minimally invasive surgical laparoscopic gallbladder removal was first performed in 1985. The technique has evolved in the years since with improved instrumentation and imaging technology. The most common reason for a cholecystectomy is to remove painful gallstones caused by spasms or blockage of the cystic or bile duct.

Gallstones can also be removed by traditional open surgery or with laparoscopic or endoscopic procedures other than gallbladder extraction. If gallstones produce no symptoms, nonsurgical treatment can be effective with medication and/or increased exercise and changes in diet, such as eating more fruits and vegetables and avoiding foods high in sugars and carbohydrates.

For more information about SILS at Bridgeport Hospital, call the Department of Surgery at 203-384-3273.

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