

# SurgeryNews

## Laparoscopic Surgery for COLON CANCER Proves to be Effective TREATMENT

**JOSEPH MARTZ, MD**

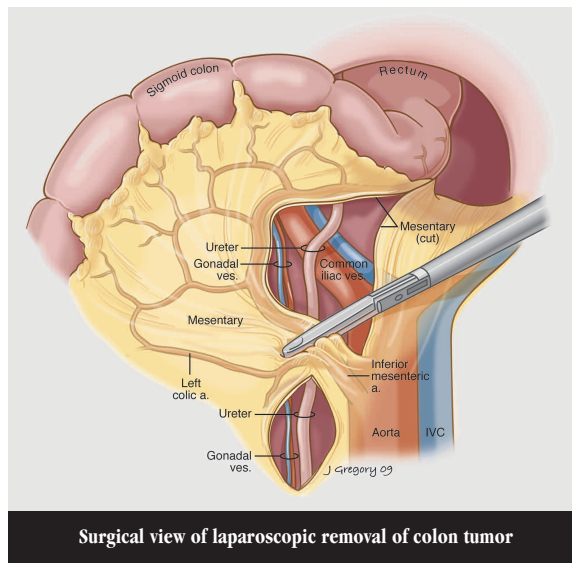
Chief of the Division of Colorectal Surgery

Specialty: Laparoscopic colorectal surgery

More than 100,000 Americans are diagnosed with colon cancer every year. Previously, treatment for approximately 90 percent of them involved major surgery with a six- to eight-inch abdominal incision. But now, colorectal surgeons like Joseph Martz, MD, a specialist in laparoscopic intestinal surgery at Beth Israel Medical Center, are using minimally invasive techniques to achieve the same results as open surgery and the benefits for patients are wide ranging.

Laparoscopic surgery has been around since 1987 when Philippe Mouret performed the first successful cholecystectomy. But it is only in recent years that minimally invasive surgery (MIS) has been gaining acceptance as an oncological procedure. Removing cancer is very different from removing an organ such as a gall bladder. Malignancies present a dynamic situation, covering a larger, less defined area. In addition to removing the tumor, lymph nodes and margins must also be cleared to ensure all cancer is gone.

In the hands of capable and experienced Beth Israel surgeons such as Dr. Martz, who completed a fellowship in colon and rectal surgery at the Lahey Clinic in Massachusetts and has performed more than 600 laparoscopic colon surgeries, patient outcomes for MIS are equal to traditional open surgeries. Beth Israel has the statistical data to back it up: **Careful post-operative tracking of Beth Israel patients—at 30 days, one**



Surgical view of laparoscopic removal of colon tumor

**year, and five years and beyond—is yet another advantage of Beth Israel's colorectal cancer service.**

Data has been compiled on thousands of patients going back 30 years, to when Warren E. Enker, MD, Vice Chairman, Department of Surgery, began developing what has become the gold standard surgical procedure, total mesorectal excision. With access to this extensive outcomes

database, Beth Israel colorectal surgeons can speak with accuracy about operative success rates for individual patients facing a host of colorectal concerns, not simply those limited to cancer.

What has become clear is that laparoscopic cancer surgery—in terms of affecting cure, limiting recurrence and improving survival—can be an effective treatment for colon cancer. The minimally invasive procedure is virtually the exact same operation as the open surgery. The tumor is removed and the lymph nodes are

cleared, but instead of a large incision with a more difficult recovery, the laparoscopic procedure involves three or four keyhole-sized cuts and can be completed in less than three hours.

As with all minimally invasive techniques, the benefits are well documented. There is less pain, less pain medication, and less overall discomfort. **In colorectal** (CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.)

## LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY FOR COLON CANCER

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**surgery, this translates to lower risk of pneumonia and other respiratory complications, lower incidence of post-op bowel obstruction, and less risk of adhesion formation.** Patients experience less bowel disturbance and less bloating—all of which lead to a faster, easier recovery and shorter hospital stays.

As beneficial as the keyhole surgery technique is for young and old patients alike, patients with advanced local disease may not be candidates for the laparoscopic approach. If there has been previous surgery or surgeries, resulting in significant scarring, MIS may not be suitable, but each patient is individually evaluated.

Accurate cancer staging is vital. Endorectal ultrasound (ERUS) and high definition MRI tests are among the imaging tests performed at Beth Israel Medical Center when deciding the treatment course.



**For more information about laparoscopic colorectal surgery or to refer a patient, please call Dr. Martz, or one of his credentialed colleagues at (212) 420-3960.**