

Heartland Women's Group Prolapse Surgery FAQ

Q: What is pelvic organ prolapse and how is it treated?

A: Pelvic prolapse is a very common condition and there are many things we can do to help patients find relief. Many women suffer from pelvic organ prolapse, a condition where the cervix, uterus, bladder, rectum, or some combination of these is bulging out through the vagina. I often tell patients this is very similar to a hernia. Some cases are very mild, and can be treated with physical therapy or other modalities. Other cases are so severe that a patient's mobility and activity are affected. These patients may have problems with urination or emptying the bladder, or with constipation. Several surgical procedures can be utilized to help patients find relief from their symptoms. When we first evaluate a patient for pelvic organ prolapse, we discuss symptoms to try to determine how much the condition is impacting a patient's quality of life. We discuss a patient's average day, their occupation and activities they enjoy. We also discuss whether they are sexually active or plan to be sexually active in the future. Conservative approaches include physical therapy and pessaries (plastic devices that are inserted to reduce the prolapse). There are also a variety of surgical approaches including vaginal procedures with and without mesh, and abdominal procedures. If the prolapse is severe, depending on the cause and particular diagnosis, we may recommend a procedure called a sacrocolpopexy.

Q: How does this procedure work? What should I expect?

A: This procedure has been the gold standard for treating pelvic organ prolapse for a number of years, but used to require an abdominal incision, several days in the hospital, and an extensive down-time for the patient. With the advent of robotic surgery, we can now offer patients the same procedure, but with many advantages. Many patients have four small incisions (similar to laparoscopy), stay one night in the hospital, and are able to return to their activities in a few short weeks. The results for patients can be quite dramatic. Recently, one of our patients commented that this procedure has changed her life. She told us that she had instant relief following the surgery. At her postoperative visit, she was very excited to talk about how she had been able to play with her grandchildren without discomfort.

Q: What does the procedure cost?

A: Most insurance providers cover the procedure. What you end up paying out of pocket is based on your insurance plan and its benefits. We will try to give you a reasonable estimate prior to the procedure however, it is an estimate and your actual costs may vary from our estimate. If you have questions about cost, please share them with us or contact your insurance company.

Q: Do the physicians performing this procedure undergo any special training?

A: Yes. This procedure has been around for many years however, it just recently become possible to perform using the DaVinci Robot. Dr. Hague and Dr. Lowden went to a special course to become certified in this area.

Q: Is there anything else I should consider?

A: If you suffer from pelvic organ prolapse, please know that many women have this condition. Only a physician that is experienced in treating prolapse can evaluate you and help determine the best course of action in your particular case, but there are many good treatments that can improve your quality of life.