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FACTSHEET

ROBOT-ASSISTED LAPAROSCOPIC NEPHRECTOMY

About the Procedure:

The kidneys are paired organs behind the abdomen that filter blood and create urine. Robot-assisted laparoscopic nephrectomy is the minimally invasive removal of a kidney, usually as a result of a tumor or because the kidney no longer functions. This helps avoid a large incision, a long hospital stay, long recovery time, and offers more cosmetically appealing results. Additionally, the use of the robotic surgery platform allows your doctor to remove the tumor more quickly, exposing you and your kidneys to less stress and potential damage. The procedure is done through 3 to 4 dime-sized incisions in the abdomen, and a separate 6 to 7 centimeter incision is made to remove the kidney itself. The procedure usually takes about 3 to 4 hours and you should expect to spend at least 1 night in the hospital.

Preparing for the Procedure:

Take only clear liquids on the day prior to the procedure. Acceptable liquids include tea or coffee (no milk or cream), water, apple juice, Gatorade or other sports drinks, pop-sicles, italian ice, or chicken broth.

Drink five ounces of citrate of magnesium at 4:00 pm the day before the procedure. If this does not produce a bowel movement by 7:00 pm take an additional 2 ounces of citrate of magnesium. This is available over the counter in the laxative section of your pharmacy. Remember to drink plenty of clear liquids to stay hydrated while preparing for your procedure.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the procedure. You should take your usual medications as you normally would the morning of your procedure with a small sip of water only (avoid juice, milk, coffee, etc.).

Starting 5 to 10 days prior to your procedure (ask your doctor for a specific time), it is important to stop taking medications that might increase your risk of bleeding. For a list of blood-thinning medications that should be avoided, ask your doctor.

After the Procedure:

There will be dressings on the incisions that can be removed on the second day after the procedure. After that, it is OK to shower (let soap and water run over the incision, then pat dry), but baths and soaking in a tub should be avoided for 2 weeks after the procedure. The incisions should be kept clean and dry to allow them to heal, so it is important to shower once a day. The incisions generally heal in five to seven days, but avoid any strenuous activity and exercise or heavy lifting for 4 to 6 weeks after the procedure. Your doctor will remove the surgical staples in your incisions at your first office visit following your discharge from the hospital. This is not painful and only takes a few minutes.

It is usually OK to resume your blood-thinning medication the day after your procedure, but check with your doctor to be sure. Take all the medications prescribed by your doctor (including any antibiotics and pain medications), and schedule an appointment to follow up with him within the first 2 weeks after the procedure (ask your doctor if you are unsure when to follow up).

Make arrangements for someone to drive you home on the day of your discharge from the hospital.