

Kidney Cancer

Solid kidney (or renal) tumors account for around 3% of adult cancers. Many renal tumors are discovered “incidentally” when an x-ray is performed for another reason. The good news about this is that tumors are found earlier and smaller and are therefore easier to treat than in the past.

Depending on the location of the tumor and its size, either part or all of the kidney will be removed to prevent spread of the tumor to other tissues. Fortunately, humans have two kidneys and can often live with just one!

Kidney tumors can be removed with a large incision, called laparotomy, but more commonly are removed using “minimally invasive” surgery, or laparoscopy.

Our practice has a long history of laparoscopic innovation. Dr. James Lingeman performed the first laparoscopic kidney removal in the state of Indiana, in the early 1990s at Methodist Hospital. Since that time, laparoscopic kidney removal has become more routine and common. Dr. Larry Munch is critically involved in the kidney donation program at Methodist Hospital, performing approximately 50 donor nephrectomy surgeries per year.

What is Laparoscopy?

Laparoscopy is technology which allows large abdominal surgeries to be accomplished through small openings in the skin. Looking inside the abdomen using special telescopes, surgeons can cut and coagulate tissue and remove organs with minimal injury to surrounding tissues. This allows for less blood loss and quick healing times. for removing kidneys with tumors or other disease.

At Methodist Urology, we use laparoscopic technology to remove total or partial kidneys due to diseases such as cancer, and also repair poorly draining kidneys caused by ureteropelvic junction (UPJ) obstruction in a procedure called pyeloplasty. Our patients recover from this surgery on a hospital unit where the nurses have extensive experience in post-surgical care for urology patients.

Resources:

For general information about laparoscopy, please see information provided by the National Institutes of Health at

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007016.htm>.

For information about kidney cancer, the American Urologic Association website may be of interest to you:

<http://www.urologyhealth.org/search/index.cfm?topic=124&search=laparoscopic%20AND%20nephrectomy&searchtype=and>