



Oregon's largest private specialty physician-owned medical clinic.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Oregon Clinic First in State to Provide Non-Visible Scar Surgery

-- Patients report high satisfaction with safe, virtually scar-free alternative to traditional and laparoscopic techniques --

Portland, Ore., Oct. 4, 2010 – *When 63-year old Mike B. was diagnosed with colon cancer his surgeon removed the segment of his colon involved with the disease as well as 18 lymph nodes through his navel. Following surgery, the Gearhart resident was amazed that there were no large abdominal incisions.*

"I had heard tales of woe from friends who had traditional surgery a few years before and the amount of scar tissue and pain they had. I was able to exercise almost right away and return to normal quickly. Subsequently, chemo killed what cancer remained. I'm one lucky guy," he said.

Forty-five year old Teresa B. lived with a golf-ball-size gall stone for ten years before deciding to have it surgically removed. A fit outdoors person who lives in Lake Tapps, Wash., Teresa spends much of her time boating and doing other water sports and fitness activities. "I was hesitant to have surgery because the thought of scarring bothered me," she said.

But when the pain became too intense, Teresa could no longer ignore the gall stone. She began extensive online research and spent many hours talking long-distance with the handful of nationally recognized medical experts that perform non-visible scar surgery. Finally, a physician in Chicago referred her to The Oregon Clinic, the first medical clinic in the state to provide the procedure.

"The pain was minimal and my recovery time was much less than I expected," said Teresa, "Within a week I was walking and after two weeks I walked several miles per day. But most important to me, there was no visible scar. It was a great experience."

Non-visible scar surgery is minimally invasive surgery that is performed under general anesthesia through a natural orifice such as the mouth or vagina. A modification of this technique is single incision or often referred to as single port surgery in which the surgery is completed through a single incision often well hidden in the patient's navel. Special surgical instruments and cameras are inserted through the single incision. Because the incision is so small, it typically leaves very little or no scarring. In comparison, traditional laparoscopic surgery usually requires four to five incisions.

The Oregon Clinic's Gastrointestinal & Minimally Invasive Surgery (GMIS) division is the only regional group performing the surgery in Oregon. GMIS surgeons include doctors Shaghayegh Aliabadi-Wahle, Mark H. Whiteford, Christy M. Dunst, Lee Swanstrom and Paul Hansen.

"We are always looking to offer a less invasive surgical alternative; while maintaining a high standard of safety," said Dr. Aliabadi-Wahle. "Long term studies will be needed to confirm whether some of this new technology will prove to be superior to our current techniques."

The GMIS division has used the technique since 2008 for a wide variety of elective procedures including laparoscopic colectomy, gall bladder surgeries, appendectomies, and Nissen fundoplication surgery for gastric reflux.

However, not all patients are good candidates for this procedure. "Certain factors such as the type of surgery required, prior surgery in the abdomen, and the weight and size of the patient need to be considered before deciding whether a patient is suitable for non-visible scar surgery," said Dr. Whiteford.

For surgeons, the single-port approach is more challenging than traditional laparoscopy because the surgeon has less freedom of movement with all instruments using the same entry point. Specially designed flexible instruments help to overcome that limitation.

About The Oregon Clinic

The Oregon Clinic is the largest private specialty physician practice in Oregon, with more than 120 physicians practicing over 30 different medical and surgical specialties and sub-specialties. We use a team approach to address health conditions at more than 15 locations from Vancouver to Salem, and from Hood River to Astoria. Founded in Portland in 1994, our physicians and staff are committed to delivering the highest quality patient care, practicing evidence-based medicine, and providing leadership for the healthcare community. Visit www.orclinic.com or call (503) 935-8000 for more information.

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