



Dr. Neri Cohen

Chest Patients Benefit from Minimally Invasive Surgery

Imagine this scenario: A 35-year-old mother gets a pre-employment physical when she changes jobs. The chest x-ray shows something: a mass. Is it cancer? The best option is thoracic—or chest—surgery, which could mean a 16-inch incision beginning mid-back, a three-week hospital stay, and an extended recovery process.

“A big incision, prolonged hospital stay, and lengthy recovery time are no longer the only choice,” says Dr. Neri Cohen, Director of Thoracic Surgery at MCVH. “Our minimally invasive technique, combined with our multi-disciplinary approach to patient care, means people don’t have to fear thoracic surgery as much as they fear the possibility of cancer.

“In this scenario, we can remove the

mass, determine whether it is cancer, and, if so, do the definitive cancer operation—all through a 4-inch incision,” he adds. “Minimally invasive thoracic surgery allows us to avoid cutting major chest wall muscles or the ribs, and even hide scars in the breast fold or under the bra strap. And we can have the patient home in three to four days. The emotional impact of confirming whether you have cancer without a big scar and long hospital stay is significant.”

Along with the minimally invasive technique, Cohen’s complete care plan integrates all aspects of the surgical process—beginning with pre-operative testing. With testing done on an outpatient basis, patients are admitted ready for surgery.

During surgery, Cohen also uses an epidural analgesia in conjunction with general anesthesia to allow patients to be extubated at the conclusion of their surgery. Post-operatively, the epidural allows complete pain control, so that patients can be up and walking that evening.

“The bottom line is that patients can recover more quickly and leave the hospital sooner, so they can continue recovering in the comfort of their own homes,” says Cohen. “Especially with lung cancer, early detection is critical to survival. The vast majority of curable stages of lung cancer are

diagnosed in patients without symptoms. If surgery isn’t such a deterrent for patients, we can get to more people sooner—and save more lives.”

Free Car Seat Safety Check This Saturday from 10 to 12

Differences in seat construction and seat belt placement among today’s cars, trucks, and SUVs can make the prospect of securing a child safety seat a daunting one. Parental confusion about child car seat installation is further complicated by issues like improper harnessing.

To help make sure your car seat can do its job, get an expert opinion. On Saturday, December 2, certified staff from MCVH’s Women’s Health and Birthing Center will conduct a car seat safety inspection from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the parking lot of Randolph Minor Hall off College Street. The inspection is free and open to the community.

The inspection is offered quarterly as part of the Women’s Health and Birthing Center’s child care education classes, which include childbirth preparation, breastfeeding, and infant massage, among others. For more information, please call 628-0600.