

# Dream MACHINE

BY JOHN BERGGREN



*Ruth Lewellyn, Concordia, was able to return to her job in medical records just six days after surgery.*

## da Vinci offers more comfortable alternative to open hysterectomy

Now, women who are not candidates for a vaginal hysterectomy because their uterus has become too enlarged have a new, less invasive alternative to open hysterectomy with Salina Regional Health Center's robotic da Vinci Surgical System.

With da Vinci, obstetrician/gynecologists use four small incisions (versus the one large incision in the abdomen required for an open procedure). Instruments are placed inside the patient through the small incisions and connected to the robotic arms of the da Vinci System. Once inside, the surgeon takes a seat at a computer console where a highly magnified, 3-D view allows a clear look at the surgical field, while hand and foot controls are used to manipulate the instruments.

### WHY DA VINCI IS BETTER FOR YOU

The precision of the technology allows for less blood loss and scarring of the patient, which translates to significantly less pain, less chance for infection, shorter hospital stays and quicker recovery times.

"Typical recovery times after open hysterectomy are four to six weeks including a two- to four-day hospital stay," says Chris Graber, M.D., a Salina obstetrician/gynecologist. "With da Vinci, patients typically go home the next day after surgery and have a recovery time of two to four weeks."

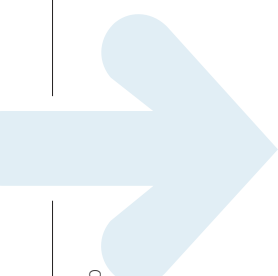
### A ROBOT CAN DO THAT?

Ruth Lewellyn, Concordia, underwent a da Vinci hysterectomy a few days after Christmas to eliminate menopausal bleeding. She hadn't even heard of the new technology until Graber recommended it.

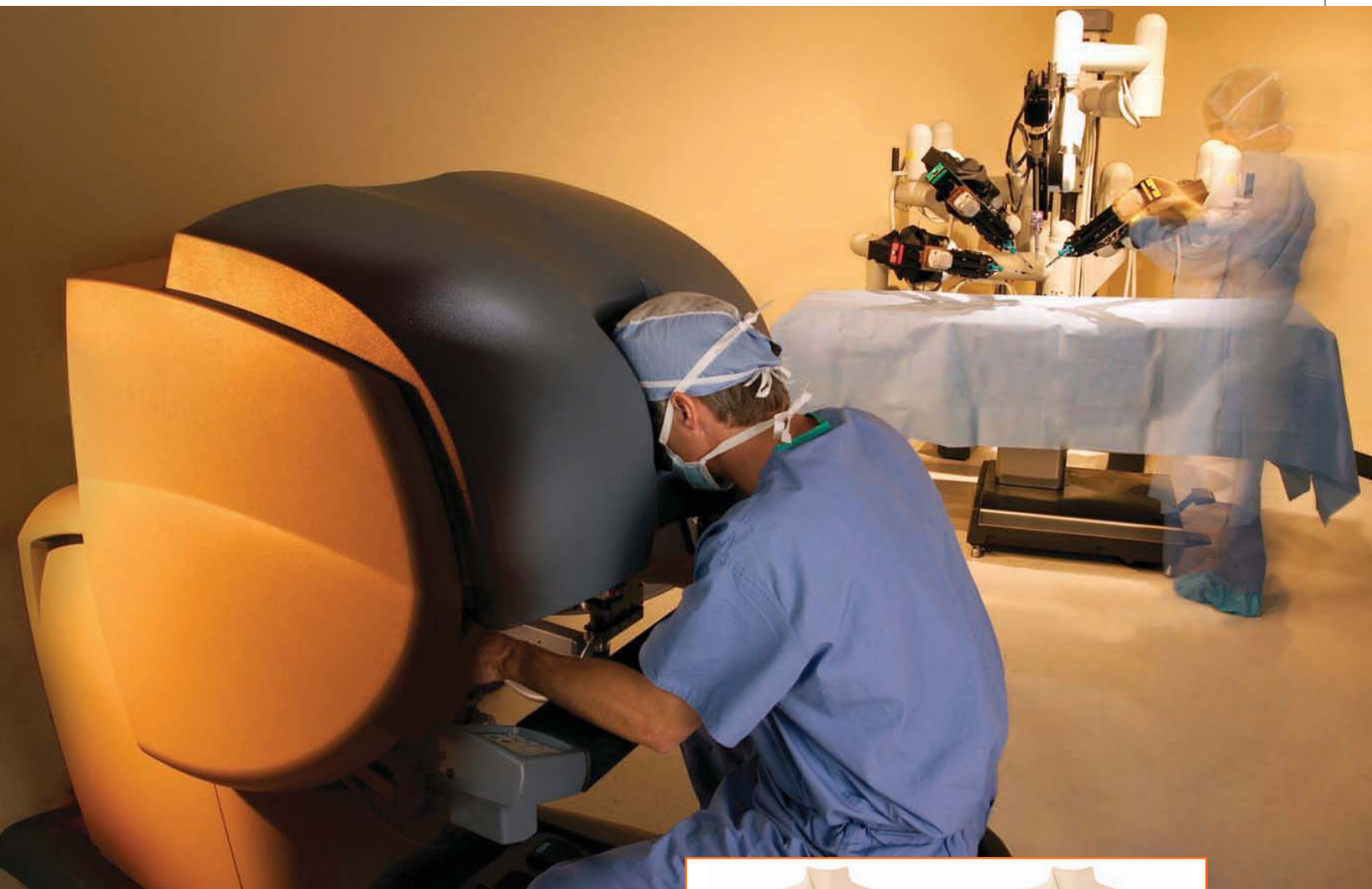
"At first when I heard they used a robot I thought, wow, how's that going to work?" Lewellyn says. "But it ended up working out great."

Lewellyn was able to go home the next day after the procedure with only minimal discomfort. Within six days she was feeling well enough to go back to work at her job in medical records at Sunset Home in Concordia.

"In the hospital they had a morphine pump hooked up for pain and I barely felt the need to use it," Lewellyn says. "My job is mainly desk work—nothing physically strenuous. I was sent home with prescriptions for extra-



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strength Motrin and Percocet, but I never filled the Percocet. I felt some pressure and cramping, but never any sharp pain.”

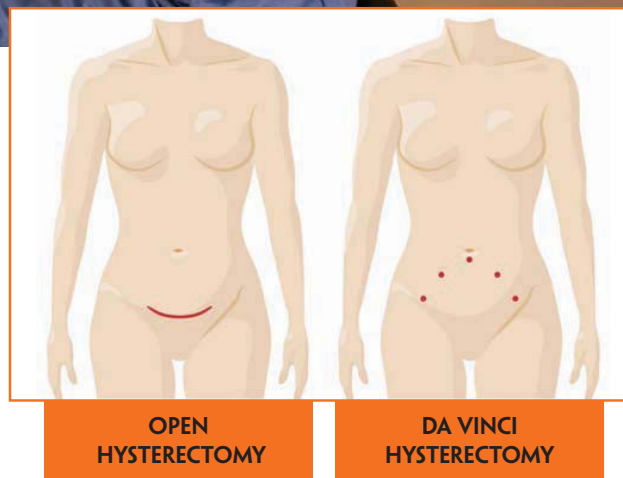
### MANY WOMEN WILL BENEFIT

While da Vinci will not replace vaginal hysterectomy, which removes the uterus through the vagina, it is a preferred option to traditional open procedures.

“Unless a patient has had previous abdominal surgeries and there is a lot of scar tissue present, the da Vinci can be used in most every other case,” says Merle “Boo” Hodges, M.D., a Salina obstetrician/gynecologist. “The magnification and precision this technology allows is amazing, and we’re able to do everything through these tiny incisions.

“But everyone should understand the correct term for this type of procedure is ‘robot-assisted surgery,’” Hodges says. “The surgeon controls every movement of the instruments inside the patient and makes every decision. It’s just a new, really great tool that we have.”

Lewellyn agrees that the results are amazing. “I would recommend any woman who has this option for hysterectomy go for it,” she says. “I’m very happy with the results.”



OPEN  
HYSTERECTOMY

DA VINCI  
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