



Salina neurosurgeon Justin Whitlow, MD, in an operating suite equipped with the Brainlab Kolibri image-guided surgical system, which provides greater precision for brain surgery.

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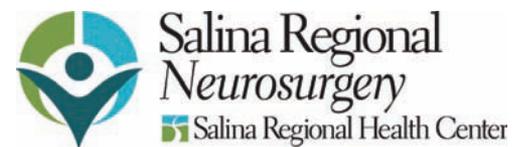
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BRAIN POWER

New technology guides brain surgeries for smaller incisions and quicker recoveries

BY JOHN BERGGREN



Previous methods of brain surgery required larger incisions and more healthy tissue to be harmed as a result of the procedure.

“In the case of a tumor resection, some tumors can be hard to see visually, which makes it hard to see where healthy brain tissue ends and tumor begins,” Whitlow says. “With this technology you can clearly see where the tumor is.”

EXPANDED SERVICES

Whitlow, a native of Beloit, joined Ali Manguoglu, MD, late last summer providing spine and cranial surgical care at Salina Regional Neurosurgery. A third neurosurgeon has signed on to join the practice later this summer.

That means shorter wait times for patients suffering from neck and back pain or loss of sensation in their extremities, and those needing consultation for an abnormality affecting the brain.

“These newly trained doctors provide many new procedures, which means fewer patients will be required to leave the area for care,” Manguoglu says. “Most of the general, state-of-the-art neurological surgeries are available here.”

Operating on delicate structures of the brain requires extreme precision. New image-guided technology made available late last year at Salina Regional Health Center makes many advanced cranial surgery interventions available in north central Kansas.

The Brainlab Kolibri surgical system allows doctors to map the skull with an accuracy of less than one millimeter, which is critical when planning approaches to a procedure and guiding doctors during surgery.

“I tell patients this is similar to the way a global positioning system guides their navigation

in a car,” says Justin Whitlow, MD, a Salina neurosurgeon. “It allows for much smaller cranial incisions, shortened operating times, quicker recoveries and much safer overall procedures.”

HOW IT WORKS

Before surgery, doctors place markers on a patient’s scalp and obtain high-resolution MRI or CT images of a patient’s brain. The 3-D images are then loaded into the Brainlab system, which uses optimal cameras and laser systems to provide doctors real-time guidance, allowing them to pinpoint the size, shape and location of diseased tissue.