

SURGICAL STRIDES

A NEW WEAPON AGAINST A DEADLY CANCER

Recovery is quicker when esophageal tumors are removed laparoscopically

A 70-year-old woman is cancer-free today thanks to minimally invasive surgery done recently at Monmouth Medical Center. And she is able to eat without pain once again.

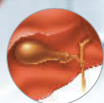
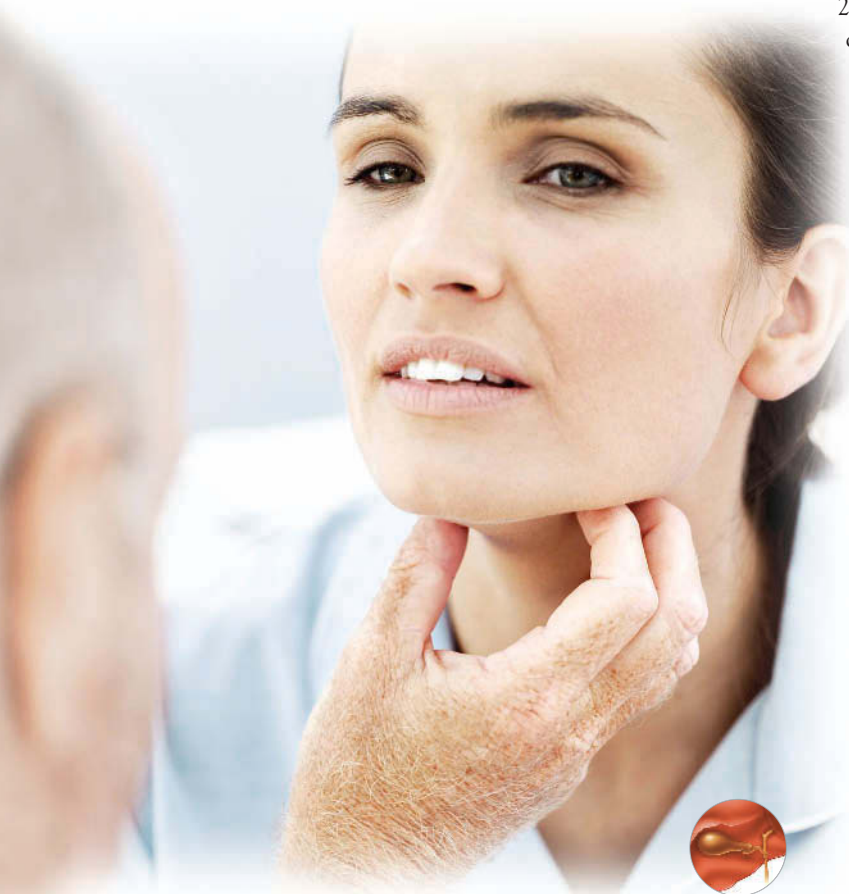
The operation, a laparoscopic esophagectomy (LE), was performed by laparoscopic surgeon Frank J. Borao, M.D., and thoracic surgeon Anthony J.

Squillaro, M.D., who removed a large tumor from the woman's esophagus.

The procedure was introduced at Monmouth just last year, and the center remains the only facility in Monmouth and Ocean counties to offer it. LE marks a new technical pinnacle for the institution's Minimally Invasive Surgery Section, established in 2000 under Dr. Borao's direction. It is technically challenging, but it's much easier on the patient than doing it the traditional way, which—because of the extent of the esophagus, or foodpipe—often requires large incisions in the abdomen, chest or neck.

Like other laparoscopic surgeries, LE is done with a very small telescope introduced into the body (through “pinhole” incisions) and tiny tools manipulated with the guidance of video monitors. “We don't actually put our hands inside the patient,” explains Dr. Borao.

Laparoscopic surgery was pioneered by gynecologists in the 1970s and has spread across the operative disciplines; the approach is now routinely employed, for example, in gallbladder procedures. (See the timeline, “Laparoscopic Surgery at Monmouth: a Heritage of Firsts,” below.) But only in the last few years has it been applied to removing the esophagus—and only, so far, in a few specialty centers across the country.



1990



1994

Laparoscopic surgery at Monmouth: a heritage of firsts

For more than a decade and a half, Monmouth Medical Center has been in the forefront of surgery's rapid advance, as the embrace of new laparoscopic techniques using much smaller incisions has made operations less invasive, recovery times faster and complications fewer. Here are a few milestones:

A team of Monmouth surgeons becomes the first in New Jersey to perform a laparoscopic cholecystectomy—the minimally invasive removal of the gallbladder.

General, vascular and orthopaedic surgeons at Monmouth do the New York/New Jersey area's first spinal fusion surgery, a less-invasive alternative to traditional surgery for degenerative disc disease.