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Robotic-assisted thoracic surgery

***Information for
patients and carers***

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary

What is this leaflet for?

We have written this leaflet to explain about robotic-assisted surgery. If you have any questions, please ask a member of our staff.

What is a robotic-assisted surgery?

Robotic-assisted surgery is a technique that uses a robotic system to help your surgeon during your operation.

A high magnification 3D camera allows your surgeon to see clearly inside your chest. The camera is attached to one of the four arms on the robotic system. It is inserted into your chest through one of the “keyholes” (small cuts).

The other robotic arms can hold various instruments, which your surgeon will use to carry out the operation. The instruments and the skin wounds are smaller than those used for traditional “open” surgery.

Is robotic-assisted surgery right for you?

Please discuss the benefits and risks of robotic-assisted surgery and how it compares with other techniques (such as other types of keyhole surgery and open surgery) with your consultant. Robotic-assisted surgery is not for everyone.

What are the benefits of this type of surgery?

This type of surgery has been shown to have the following advantages:

- Small scars. A few small incisions (cuts) in the chest instead of the large scar from an open operation.
- Less pain compared to open surgery.
- Less blood loss. Robotic-assisted surgery reduces the risk of needing a blood transfusion.
- Shorter stay in hospital. Robotic-assisted surgery can reduce how long you need to stay in hospital after your operation.
- More accurate. The 3D vision and better mobility of the instruments give the surgeons a high level of control within your chest. This helps to reduce the risks of surgery and makes it easier to see the organs and tissues the surgeons are operating on.
- Faster recovery. Most people can return to work and their usual activities after 6 to 8 weeks.

How is it carried out?

Using the robotic system and 3D camera, your surgeon can carry out a precise operation in a smaller space, so you do not need to have a large incision (cut).

Your surgeon is in the same room, but away from you. They control the robotic arms to perform the operation.

The robot is **not performing** the surgery; the surgeon still carries out the procedure. The robotic system allows more controlled and precise movements during the operation.

What are the disadvantages of robotic-assisted surgery?

The surgeon can't "feel" your tissues or organs as in traditional open surgery so they need specialised training to use the equipment safely.

Although rare, we may need to change to open surgery if there is a lot of bleeding, for unforeseen complications or for other technical issues. Your surgeon will discuss this with you.

What are the possible risks or side effects?

Your consultant will discuss the risks of your procedure with you, but please ask questions if you are uncertain.

Most procedures have possible side effects, although most people do not have any problems.

Contact us:

If you have any further questions about your procedure, please contact:

Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary

 01224 552298

 gram.noscts@nhs.scot

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