

## Single site incision makes hysterectomy recovery shorter

*Minimally invasive surgery now even more minimal*

By KATHRYN M. ROY

**S**urgery to remove the uterus or ovaries once automatically meant weeks of recovery and an ugly, visible scar for the patient.

But one Western Massachusetts surgeon, Dr. Elliot B. Greenberg of Baystate Ob/Gyn Group Inc., is helping to make this type of surgery even more less invasive by today's standards with a surgical approach performed through a single, hidden incision.

The surgery is known commonly as Laparoendoscopic Single Site Surgery, single port surgery or Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery.

It gives eligible patients the choice of a different minimally invasive approach for hysterectomy and other gynecological surgeries.

"It allows us to provide excellent cosmetic results," Greenberg said.

"It allows us to introduce all of our instruments through the belly button. We can almost always bury it within the belly button and typically, you can't tell they even had surgery."

In traditional laparoscopic surgery, there are multiple small incisions, resulting in small scars.

Traditional procedures also involve instruments being introduced through the muscle layers, but with this single site surgery, surgeons go through the thinnest part of the abdominal wall, making a small incision of about one inch, through which all the instruments pass through.

"The thought is, we're minimizing discomfort and pain by going through a thin portion," Greenberg said.

Greenberg, who has been performing the surgery for about two years, said he is teaching doctors the special techniques used to perform it.

He has taught about a half-dozen classes across



Staff photo by MICHAEL S. GORDON  
**Nancy E. Moulton, of Westfield, a patient of Dr. Elliot Greenberg's, had single site incision surgery for her hysterectomy performed in March. "I went for a follow-up 10 days later and everything was fine. I got the OK to start working out again and I was back at the gym the next day," she said. "I can't say enough about it. If people are able to go that route, I definitely would."**

the country to doctors interested in beginning the practice.

Surgeons need to learn how to maneuver instruments through the single incision site in a different manner than they would in traditional laparoscopic surgeries.

"The surgery goes just as

fast and patients really love the results," Greenberg said.

"Most are going home within 24 hours, and are back to normal activities within a week."

That compares with a traditional wait of six weeks before returning to normal activities.

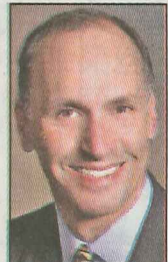
Nancy E. Moulton, of Westfield, a patient of

Greenberg's, had the surgery for her hysterectomy performed in March.

She said she was referred to Greenberg by her gynecologist, who is not a surgeon.

"I was very excited about it," she said, when she learned about the single incision surgery.

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Greenberg said 100 percent of patients who are approved for the procedure have opted for it and have been very happy.

"As our technology evolves, more and more procedures will be amenable to it," he said.

Currently, area surgeons are using the surgery for other procedures, but none which are gynecological.

Greenberg said more manufacturers are beginning to produce instruments better suited for the procedure, opening the door for more doctors to begin using it.

"It's becoming an increasingly popular procedure," Greenberg said.

"The risks of the surgery are the same as any laparoscopic procedure."

Moulton said she has told everyone she knows about the surgery.

"I can't say enough about it," she said. "If people are able to go that route, I definitely would."

Greenberg sees patients in both the Springfield and West Springfield offices of Baystate Ob/Gyn Group Inc. For more information, visit [www.bogg.com](http://www.bogg.com) or call (413) 794-1599.