



# Armed For The Cancer Fight

*Dr. Wong Kutt Seng (centre), Specialist in General Surgery, specialises in laparoscopic surgery, endoscopy and anorectal surgery.*

It is a leading cause of death worldwide and continues to plague millions. While prevention and early detection remain potent weapons in the fight against cancer, with medical advances there is now a better chance of battling this dreaded disease more than ever before.

Today, Raffles Hospital is well positioned to take the battle against cancer by employing minimally invasive procedures where possible, to reduce scarring and time for healing. Such a minimally invasive approach provides low morbidity, tiny operating scars and rapid recovery.

Take colorectal cancer for instance, for it remains one of the most common cancers worldwide. Traditionally, a colectomy (removal of part or all of the large intestine or colon) involves open surgery through an incision 20 to 30 centimetres long.

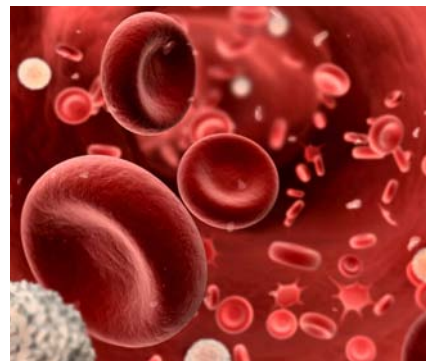
However, surgeons at Raffles Surgery Centre now use laparoscopy techniques, which only require several tiny incisions.

The laparoscope is a telescopic video camera that gives surgeons a better view of internal organs compared to the naked eye within traditional procedures.

Dr. Wong Kutt Sing is a Specialist in General Surgery at the Centre and has sub-specialty interests that include laparoscopic surgery, gastroscopy, colonoscopy and anorectal surgery.

“While the aim of a keyhole laparoscopic procedure is the same as traditional surgery, patients benefit from less pain, less blood loss, and fewer infections or complications. They also enjoy a significantly shorter hospital stay and recovery time thanks to the smaller incisions,” informs Dr. Wong.

Surgical incisions after a laparoscopic colectomy are barely visible after a few months, as opposed to scars from traditional procedures that are still obvious several years on.





According to Dr. Wong, who has mentored international surgeons in laparoscopic colorectal surgery, the most important factor is that cancer survival rates have been proven better for patients after undergoing this procedure.

Another example of Raffles Hospital's 'high-tech' fight against cancer is used in the treatment of prostate cancer, a common cancer affecting men. The prostate is a walnut-sized male gland sitting in a deep cavity within the pelvic region, and surrounded by many vital nerves controlling urinary and sexual functions. To remove it, open surgery (prostatectomy) would normally be required.

A more recent advancement is the laparoscopic procedure that uses a specialised surgical camera and rigid

instrumentation to access and remove the prostate, via a series of small incisions. However, this also has its limitations and risks, especially for more complex cases.

At Raffles Hospital, suitable male patients have the option of a robotic prostatectomy, where high-precision robotic technologies are employed to achieve a similar goal, but with higher effectiveness and lower risks.

A Specialist in Urology at Raffles Uro-Renal Centre, **Dr. Fong Yan Kit** shares his expertise. "The main goal of a prostatectomy is to remove any cancer present. But with a robotic prostatectomy, a secondary goal of the preservation of urinary and erectile functions can also be achieved, due to improved clarity (for the surgeon) of the critical nerves and tissues in that area."

*Dr. Fong Yan Kit provides consultation and treatment for urological conditions including prostate disease, erectile dysfunction and genitourinary cancer.*