Patients who need heart surgery can have less trauma, less postoperative pain, a shorter hospital stay, lower rates of complications and a speedier return to their normal life thanks to new techniques used by surgeons at Cleveland Clinic Florida Weston.

“I operated on a patient on Monday one week, and saw him eating dinner with his wife in a restaurant on Friday. That does not happen with regular surgery,” says Doug Boyd, M.D., a Cleveland Clinic cardiac surgeon.

Dr. Boyd explains that there are several technological advances that have eased heart surgery for many patients.

Scope It Out

In the 1980s, general surgeons started using laparoscopes to operate without opening up the body with a large incision. Cardiac surgeons recognized that patients would recover more quickly if they could operate laparoscopically, eliminating the large, chest-cracking incision they needed to access the heart. But in the lab they discovered that the fine manipulations needed for microvascular surgery

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were impossible with the laparoscope, which exacerbated natural tremors. “It was beyond the limits of human dexterity,” Dr. Boyd explains.

They turned to robotics and ultimately developed a three-component system—a surgeon’s console, a computer controller and the long instruments—that could give surgeons rock-steady movement without opening up the chest. The system also added much greater magnification—up to 15 times—and 3-D scopes that give depth perception.

**Keep the Beat**

At the same time researchers were experimenting with robotics, they were also developing a way to operate on the heart without using the heart-lung machine, since pumping the body’s blood through a foreign system can lead to trauma and complications. They developed tools that help surgeons stabilize a small section of the heart and operate on it while the rest of the heart continues working to circulate blood through the body.

It’s still in the approval stages in the United States, but surgeons have combined robotic laparoscopic techniques with the off-pump procedure to operate on a beating heart without opening the chest.

**Training Techniques**

“These robotic systems are so powerful that learning in heart surgery is also changing,” Dr. Boyd explains. He says that most cardiac surgeons have not been trained in laparoscopic surgery, so they have to learn a new skill set. “Because most programs are not yet teaching them, we’re mentoring the mentors. We are early enough in the learning curve to be way ahead of every other center in the United States.”

“I logged in over the Internet and was able to manipulate instruments and help with a case in China while I was in Florida.”—Doug Boyd, M.D.

Florida,” says Dr. Boyd, who teaches the technique all over the world.

**No Continental Divide**

Dr. Boyd explains that, in robotic surgery, the surgeon sits about eight feet away from the patient. But once the surgeon is removed from the patient, it’s just a matter of using a longer wire or different technology to move the surgeon even farther away.

“I logged in over the Internet and was able to manipulate instruments and help with a case in China while I was in Florida,” he says. He expects telesurgery to prove useful for patients in remote areas and even in space. “The technology was born and bred in NASA labs, so, for example, if an astronaut got appendicitis, they could have a robot and a technician on the spacecraft and be able to manipulate the instruments from a distance.”

In Canada, where telesurgery is already approved, southern Ontario surgeons have performed two hernia repairs on patients in the remote north.
Obesity in the United States has reached epic levels—according to Raul Rosenthal, M.D., director of the obesity program at Cleveland Clinic Florida Weston, 61 percent of adults and 25 percent of children have the disease. To help people combat this serious health problem, the hospital has created a new institute for bariatric surgery.

Bariatric surgery can help people lose weight permanently and reduce the risk of obesity-related health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis, sleep apnea, heartburn, depression and incontinence. “We have patients diagnosed with diabetes or hypertension who see their symptoms disappear after surgery,” Dr. Rosenthal says. “They no longer have to take medication.”

The center offers centralized testing and surgery, simplifying what can be a difficult process. A team of specialists, including surgeons, nurses, dietitians and nutritionists, and clinical and research fellows, ensures top-quality care.

Many patients opt for a gastric bypass, which Dr. Rosenthal calls the gold standard of bariatric surgery. With the bypass, the surgeon creates a small pouch in the stomach and attaches the small intestine to it. After surgery, you feel full and satisfied after eating a small amount of food. “This procedure is not new. It’s been around since 1954,” he explains. “And now the surgery is done laparoscopically, so the procedure has become safer, with less trauma to the patient.”

Another procedure, called the gastric band—also done laparoscopically—uses an adjustable silicone band to divide the stomach. Doctors can adjust the band with a balloon, without having to operate again. “This is a relatively new procedure, available in the United States for about two years,” Dr. Rosenthal says.

Some centers offer only one surgical procedure, but Dr. Rosenthal and Samuel Szomstein, M.D., the institute’s associate director, choose the best option for each patient. “The bypass is more effective but more invasive,” Dr. Rosenthal says. Patients usually stay in the hospital for three days, compared to 24 hours with the band. But bypass patients typically lose 70 percent of their excess weight in the first year, while band patients lose 50 percent in the first two years. Dr. Rosenthal says for the right patient, often adolescents and patients who have other medical conditions that won’t allow a bypass, the band is “fantastic.”

Make an Appointment

To schedule an appointment with a Cleveland Clinic Florida physician, call 1-800-691-6555.
If you’re considering surgery to treat cataracts, Cleveland Clinic Florida Weston offers state-of-the-art same-day surgery, with no shot and no stitches. “Anesthesia options have traditionally entailed injections underneath and behind the eye,” explains Quentin Allen, M.D., a Cleveland Clinic ophthalmologist. “We advocate a less-invasive technique, using a potent topical numbing gel on the surface of the eye, as well as numbing drops.” This technique reduces the risks associated with surgery and makes for more rapid recovery of vision.

The ophthalmology team also uses the new IOLMaster™. The state-of-the-art device is a non-contact laser system that offers the most accurate and precise method of calculating a person’s intraocular lens power. “It doesn’t touch the eye, so it improves patient comfort,” says David Jones, M.D., a Cleveland Clinic ophthalmologist.

Patients who have advanced glaucoma in addition to cataracts can have both problems treated in the same operation, reducing the need for costly eye drops and the possible side effects of medication. “The combined surgery is a very effective method of reducing pressure and improving vision without significantly increasing the risk of either procedure,” Dr. Allen says.

Cleveland Clinic doctors have been involved in research trials, testing the newest glaucoma medications, and they have access to the newest agents available to treat patients with all types of glaucoma. The surgeons at Cleveland Clinic are also experienced with both laser and surgical options for treating glaucoma.

The team, which includes David Hardy, M.D., offers a full range of medical and surgical treatments for eye diseases.
SKIN SO SMOOTH & VIBRANT

If you’d like to fight the signs of aging but you’re hesitant about surgery, consider laser procedures. “We have treatments that can help impede the aging process, including laser rejuvenation, the newest form of treatment, which has no downtime. It builds up collagen, improves texture and tone, and decreases fine lines,” says Tamara Lior, M.D., head of Mohs and Laser Surgery. In addition to collagen and BOTOX® or wrinkles, the Department of Dermatology also offers laser treatment for hair removal, sunspots, blood vessels, scars and birthmarks. To schedule a cosmetic consultation, please call 954-659-5263.

KNOW YOUR RISK

Colorectal cancer can be treated if it’s caught early, so it’s important to see a doctor if you have symptoms: rectal bleeding, a change in bowel habits, abdominal pain or unexplained weight loss. “Also, learn your family history—you may be a member of a family at risk,” says Juan Nogueras, M.D., a Cleveland Clinic colorectal surgeon. To make an appointment, call 1-800-691-6555.

DON’T BE EMBARRASSED

Women are often embarrassed to talk to their doctors about urinary and gynecological problems, but it’s important to speak up. “There are some very simple treatments for urinary incontinence, and it’s a common problem, especially in women who are postmenopausal,” explains Minda Neimark, M.D., a Cleveland Clinic urogynecologist. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-691-6555.

YOUR BEST BET

The best way to beat cancer is to find it early. Elizabeth Stone, M.D., a Cleveland Clinic oncologist, says, “Currently, we are fortunate to have good, simple screening tools for both breast and cervical cancer.” Pap smears can detect cervical cancer at its earliest stages, and mammograms, breast self-exams and clinician exams can find breast lumps. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-691-6555.

SKIN CARE CENTER

Cleveland Clinic Florida offers a full range of skin care and treatments—including glycolic treatments, deep pore cleansing facials, microdermabrasion, back and shoulder treatments, lash and brow tinting, and permanent make-up—to help patients achieve and maintain healthy and beautiful skin. Benefits of massage therapy can include relieving stress-related symptoms, reducing anxiety and promoting your overall wellbeing. Services are provided by staff aestheticians who are specially trained in skin care and massage. For information or appointments, call 954-659-5401.

YOGA AND ACUPUNCTURE

Yoga’s guided imagery, meditation and focused breathing patterns can bring therapeutic benefits to people who are coping with illness and offer stress relief to everyone. And acupuncture is a natural healing process that recruits the body’s own internal mechanisms to heal itself. It’s been practiced for thousands of years, and research now shows that acupuncture stimulates the release of endorphins and helps the body modulate its pain response. Call 954-385-6634 to register for yoga classes, or call 954-659-5401 for more information about acupuncture.

Book a Cleveland Clinic Florida Speaker

The Cleveland Clinic Florida speakers bureau has physicians and allied health professionals with expertise in a wide range of healthcare subjects, from cardiology to eye care to the latest research and medical treatments. If you would like someone from Cleveland Clinic to speak to your group or organization, please call toll-free, 1-800-691-6555.

www.clevelandclinic.org/florida

Log on to find out more about the services at Cleveland Clinic Florida Weston.
Watch Your Back
New Spine Institute Helps Heal Back Problems

If you need care for a back problem, look to Cleveland Clinic Florida Weston. The new Spine Institute will offer top-notch patient care, conduct clinical research and provide advanced training in spinal medicine and surgery.

Robert Biscup, D.O., Robert E. Isaacs, M.D., and Somnath N. Nair, M.D., form the Institute’s surgical team. The Institute also has medical spine specialists, orthopaedic spine surgeons, neurological spine surgeons, neurologists, pain management specialists, psychiatrists, physical and occupational specialists, and clinical research specialists on its staff.

“Our intention is to become a national and international center for all aspects of spinal medicine and surgery,” Dr. Biscup says.

People with back problems can visit the Institute for:

• Initial consultations
• Diagnostic tests
• Pain management
• Minimally invasive spine surgery
• Adult reconstruction
• Revision spine surgery

On the research side, the Institute’s team collects data on a variety of topics that will help them improve patient care. The researchers’ efforts help them to follow each patient’s progress as they meet with different members of the team.

The Institute is also establishing a graduate training program, where doctors from across the country and around the world can learn the latest techniques.

Map to Cleveland Clinic Florida Weston
For more detailed directions, visit our Web site at www.clevelandclinic.org/florida

To make an appointment, call 1-800-691-6555