

Thanks to increased awareness and screening, colorectal cancer cases have fallen in the United States—but that doesn't mean you shouldn't worry about this condition. Colorectal cancer, diverticulitis and inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis still strike thousands of Americans every year. If you're one of them, Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital offers some of the best hands you could be in.

David Ondrula, M.D., a board-certified general and colorectal surgeon at Good Shepherd Hospital, performs minimally invasive, hand-assisted laparoscopic colorectal surgery, a procedure that results in less time in the operating room, a faster recovery, smaller incisions and less time in the hospital.

About the procedure

In hand-assisted surgery, Dr. Ondrula makes a very small (maximum 5.5 centimeters) incision in a patient's abdomen through which he uses his hand and two 1.5 centimeter incisions for his instruments. Nationwide, only 20 percent of colorectal surgeries are performed with this minimally invasive technique. However, Dr. Ondrula performs 95 percent of his colon resections using the laparoscopic technique.



A better kind of colorectal surgery

"It's basically the best of both worlds—patients receive the benefits of hand-assisted surgery and the speed of open surgery," he adds.

A speedier recovery

Patients normally spend up to one week in the hospital after traditional colorectal surgery. After the minimally invasive procedure, however, most patients can return home in just two to three days. Plus, bowel function and normal eating can be resumed faster. Overall, patients who have minimally invasive sur-

gery are typically back to their normal activities in two weeks.

Cancer outcomes are the same with minimally invasive and open surgery, Dr. Ondrula says, but patients can begin chemotherapy treatment sooner if their colorectal surgery is hand-assisted.

Got cancer questions?

Call Good Shepherd Hospital's HUGS Line at **847-842-HUGS (4847)**.

Catch colon problems early!

Regular colonoscopy screenings beginning at age 50 are important, says Dr. Ondrula, but should start earlier if a relative has a history of colorectal cancer (preferably at least 10 years before the age at which the family member was diagnosed).



Time for your colonoscopy?

Call **1-800-3-ADVOCATE (1-800-323-8622)** to find a Good Shepherd Hospital GI doctor.