

*Tammy Myers  
has energy to  
spare after a hys-  
terectomy done  
via the da Vinci®  
robot resolved  
heavy bleeding*



## Re-energized and Back to Her Life

*By Mary Jo Lane*

After more than five years of heavy monthly menstrual cycles, Tammy Myers was ready to be done with pain and low energy levels. “I kept trying to wait it out until menopause, but the discomfort just got more and more annoying,” she says.

Although she had seen other doctors for her concerns, it took a visit with

obstetrician/gynecologist Shelly Joiner, MD, at Lifestages – Samaritan Centers For Women to put Tammy at ease about her next steps.

“I went in for a general exam and shared my frustrations, asking Dr. Joiner what my options were. After some diagnostic tests, she said it was really up to me, but she thought hysterectomy

# Good Samaritan Now a Training Center for Robotic Surgery

Good Samaritan's expertise in robotic surgery has earned the hospital designation as a robotic benign gynecologic epicenter by Intuitive Surgical, Inc., the makers of the da Vinci® robot. One of only 25 benign epicenters in the United States and one of two in Ohio, Good Samaritan is now a destination for doctors across the country to receive robotic surgery training.

Epicenter sites are chosen for their excellence in patient outcomes, passion for teaching and ability to convey to others the value for their patients.

Bruce Bernie, MD, Good Samaritan's medical director for robotic surgery, manages the epicenter and also trains visiting physicians and surgeons. He has been involved with advanced technologies in gynecology throughout his 35 years of practice. Since learning and mastering the da Vinci® robotic system in 2006, Dr. Bernie has completed more than 300 robotic surgical procedures. "With my practice at Lifestages – Samaritan Centers For Women, one of my goals is to practically eliminate abdominal surgery for women," says Dr. Bernie.



Good Samaritan invested approximately \$2.5 million in the da Vinci® system to further the quality of care by offering patients a minimally invasive option. While the epicenter focuses on gynecologic procedures, the Good Samaritan robotic program also includes general surgery and urology.

would be the best solution," the 53-year-old explains. Tests had revealed that, like her mother and sister, she had a lot of fibroid tumors that cause excess bleeding.

## **Less Pain With Robotic Surgery**

Still, Tammy was concerned about the pain and six- to eight-week recovery time for a traditional hysterectomy.

Fortunately, Dr. Joiner had good news: she could perform the surgery with Good Samaritan's da Vinci® robotic system, minimizing Tammy's pain and

speeding her recovery.

"The biggest advantages of robotic surgery are shorter hospital stays, faster patient recovery time, less blood loss and reduced post-operative pain," Dr. Joiner says. "Most women who are healthy enough for surgery are candidates for robotic surgery."

## **Minimally Invasive Options**

She notes that all Lifestages physicians select the best procedure for each patient. As needed, they'll refer patients to other doctors in the group who

are experts in a specific surgery. "We focus on all types of minimally invasive surgery, which is much easier on patients than traditional surgeries with large abdominal incisions. Thanks to advances in technology and training for our physicians, patients who need traditional abdominal surgery are few and far between today," Dr. Joiner says.

Robotic surgery is particularly effective if patients have a lot of scar tissue or big masses in the pelvis, a large uterus, or if they're overweight or



Dr. Shelly Joiner

obese. The robot's camera and strong, articulating arms allow the surgeon to be extremely precise while operating through tiny incisions.

"Dr. Joiner explained everything really well and gave me a DVD so I could see how precise robotic surgery is and why there is so little bleeding. I was willing to go ahead with a hysterectomy because the robotic option was so non-invasive. Otherwise I would have continued to put it off," Tammy says.

#### **Speedy Recovery**

After her afternoon surgery at Good Samaritan, Tammy stayed overnight and went home the next day. "A week later, I felt great. I wasn't running at full speed, but I was out doing things and felt very good. I had no pain, no bleeding — that was a wonderful thing!" Less than a month later, this busy wife

and mother of three was back to all her normal activities.

She was delighted with her experience at Good Samaritan — her first — and with Dr. Joiner's expertise and support. "When I was at Good Sam, everybody there was really friendly and interested in me. Dr. Joiner was easy to talk to, and she was a joy to have on my side for something like this," Tammy says.

Today she continues to marvel at how much more energy she has since the heavy bleeding has stopped. "Now I tell everybody I know that if they have this problem, they need to do something about it. They have no idea how much better they'll feel!"

*For more information on robotic surgery at Good Samaritan, visit [www.GoodSamDayton.org/Robotics](http://www.GoodSamDayton.org/Robotics).*

## It's the Little Things that Count

Technological and surgical advances that permit surgeons to do their work through small incisions have rapidly made minimally invasive approaches the standard of care at Lifestages — Samaritan Centers For Women.

Compared with open surgery, procedures done using smaller incisions typically result in less pain and scarring and faster recovery for patients.

While not every procedure and patient qualify for these techniques, Lifestages doctors currently perform 98 percent of their cases using minimally invasive approaches, including:

- \* Robotic surgery for hysterectomy, myomectomy, sacrocolpopexy and for endometriosis, ovarian cysts and pelvic adhesions.

- \* LESS (Laparo-Endoscopic Single-Site) surgery and conventional laparoscopic surgery for hysterectomy, oophorectomy, myomectomy, endometriosis, ovarian cysts, pelvic adhesions and evaluation of pelvic pain.
- \* Bladder and pelvic procedures including Tension-Free Vaginal Tape (TVT) to stop urinary leakage, cystocele/rectocele repair to restore organs to their proper place and InterStim, a small pacemaker-like device implanted in the lower back to decrease or eliminate urinary incontinence.
- \* Endometrial (uterine) ablation to stop excessive bleeding and reduce symptoms of menstrual pain.