

Surgeons remove gall bladder through belly button to prevent scars

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Surgeons at The Methodist Hospital in Houston are removing gall bladders through a single incision in the belly button to prevent scarring for patients with gall stones. The procedure also has the potential for less pain.

Traditional laparoscopic cholecystectomies, or gall bladder removals, involve four ½-inch or smaller incisions that may leave scars.

“Our patients like this single-incision surgery because they’re left with essentially no visible scars,” said Dr. Brian Dunkin, head of endoscopic surgery at The Methodist Hospital. “Also, they can go home just hours after the procedure is completed.”

This procedure, known as SILS™ or single [incision](#) laparoscopic surgery, is at the forefront of the push towards minimally invasive surgeries, which hold the promise of less scarring and potentially less pain in recovery. The major advantage of SILS is that it uses only one access point, through the patient’s belly button, ultimately resulting in the potential for no visible scar.

This is possible because of new technology designed to allow better access from a single entryway. A small device is placed in the tiny belly button incision, providing a portal for the surgeon’s laparoscopic tools that are used to access and safely remove the gall bladder through the belly button. Using the next generation SILS procedure, surgeons make a single 20 mm incision through the belly button, camouflaging the entire

scar.

Approximately 20 million adults in the U.S. have gallstones, and approximately 500,000 procedures are performed each year in the U.S. Gallstones are twice as likely to occur in women. Overweight people, older adults, Native Americans and Mexican Americans are also at greater risk.

The gallbladder is a small pear-shaped organ located in the upper abdomen beneath the liver. While the gallbladder's main function - to store bile produced by the liver and release it for digestion - is important to the body, it is not essential. Gallbladder surgeries are usually performed for the treatment of gallstones - small solid formations of cholesterol and bile salts within the gallbladder - or inflammation of the gallbladder, known as cholecystitis.

Provided by Methodist Institute for Technology

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