## Main Line HealthCare

## **Laparoscopic Colectomy**

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Accelerated recovery after colectomy has become one of the more exciting recent surgical trends. Care pathways, early oral nutrition, strategies to decrease narcotic use, selective narcotic receptor blockers, and minimally invasive surgical techniques are all used to hasten the return of bowel activity after colon surgery and shorten the hospital stay.

At Lankenau Hospital, the majority of elective colectomies are performed laparoscopically. Surgery for benign conditions such as diverticulitis, colon polyps, and Crohn's Disease, as well as for colon cancer are approached in this fashion. Large, randomized trials have demonstrated that lapraroscopy for cancer shortens hospital stays by an average of one day, with less pain medication use, and no change in cancer outcome compared to open colectomy.

Another benefit harder to quantify is the return of the patient to work and full physical activity. For example, a typical young patient who requires sigmoid resection for diverticulitis will go home on the second or third day after surgery, return part-time to a desk job in about two weeks, and be fully recovered by four weeks. He will have three tiny scars from port sites, and a two-inch scar near the left hip. This is in contrast to a 6-8 week recovery with a 12-18 inch midline scar with the open colectomy.