

# Laparoscopic Colon Surgery

**A minimally invasive approach to the colon means less postoperative discomfort, less pain medication, and a quicker return to activities ... but choose your specialist carefully.**

Jayne Pignatone has spent some time in the medical field.

"I work for a retina specialist at Eye Centers of Florida," explains Jayne.

Recently, however, she found she needed some medical care for herself.

"I consulted a gastroenterologist for dysphagia, or difficulty swallowing," says Jayne. "I was going to have my esophagus dilated, and the doctor said, *As long as you're asleep, you may as well have your colonoscopy done.*

"Then he found something suspicious that he didn't like. Sometimes, if they discover a small polyp, they just take it out during the colonoscopy. But what I had required something more."

Jayne's gastroenterologist referred her to Janette U. Gaw, MD, a board-certified colorectal surgeon with The Colorectal Institute.

"I had no symptoms, nothing," says



## The Colorectal Institute

Valerie R. Dyke, MD  
Janette U. Gaw, MD  
Cesar A. Santiago, MD

Jayne, "and I was full of trepidation. But everyone there was very comforting. Dr. Gaw's staff was great, and she was absolutely amazing."

### Fellowship training

"Colon cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in the country," says Dr. Gaw, "and the sad part about that is that colon cancer is completely preventable and treatable. The colonoscopy is the only test we have that really prevents colon cancer, because if we find polyps during a colonoscopy, we take them out."

Dr. Gaw and her colleagues, Valerie R. Dyke, MD, and Cesar A. Santiago, MD, are the only fellowship-trained colorectal surgeons operating in Lee County, and they treat a wide range of disorders, from colon cancer to hemorrhoids. They always use the latest technologies and a multidisciplinary approach to evaluate and treat their patients.

"When a problem is detected early,

most of the time we can do a minimally invasive procedure with a laparoscope," explains Dr. Gaw. "Because the procedure is performed through smaller incisions than the traditional approach, patients have less pain, require less medication, get out of the hospital sooner, and return to normal activities sooner.

"However," she cautions, "anyone interested in having laparoscopic surgery should ask their surgeon how familiar they are with it and how many similar procedures they have performed. Your surgeon should have performed the procedure at least twenty times before being considered proficient. Fortunately, the mass in Jayne's colon was benign, but not everyone is so lucky."

### "They're all wonderful"

Jayne says her care was world class from start to finish.

"Dr. Gaw and her associates all spoke in layman's terms so that I understood what was done, why it was done, and what to expect postoperatively," she says. "They sent the entire part of the colon that was removed to the pathologist, to make sure it wasn't cancerous, and thank God it wasn't."

Because the procedure was done laparoscopically, Jayne's recovery time was considerably reduced.

"The healing process went along beautifully," she assures, "and I was back to work in three weeks. It was a good experience. I'm very thankful to my primary care doctor, to the gastroenterologist, and to Dr. Gaw and her associates. They're all just wonderful."

FHCN—Michael J. Sabno



Valerie R. Dyke, MD, FACS, FASCRS is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery. After receiving her medical degree from the University of Maryland, she completed her general surgical residency at Abington Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia. Dr. Dyke then completed a colorectal surgery fellowship at the Ferguson Colorectal Clinic in Michigan.



Janette U. Gaw, MD, FACS is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery. After receiving her medical degree from Yale University, where she also completed her general surgery residency, Dr. Gaw was awarded a research fellowship with the Division of Colorectal Surgery at the Mayo Clinic. She then completed a colorectal surgery fellowship at the Georgia Colon and Rectal Surgery Clinic in Atlanta.



Cesar A. Santiago, MD is board certified by the American Board of Surgery. After receiving his medical degree from Ponce School of Medicine, Dr. Santiago completed his general surgery residency at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine/Cabrini. He then completed a colorectal surgery fellowship at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital.



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