

About Alta Bates Summit Medical Center

At Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, we specialize in minimally invasive thoracic surgery in the treatment of lung cancer.

In the United States, lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer death. Almost 200,000 people will be diagnosed with lung cancer this year and many of them will be candidates for surgical treatment. At Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, we specialize in minimally invasive surgery for the treatment of lung cancer and many of our patients have benefited from this option.

When lung cancer is diagnosed in the early stages, guidelines for treatment (NCCN) recommend surgical removal of the affected portion of the lung, known as a lobectomy. Lobectomy has been classically performed through a “thoracotomy” incision, which is a 5-6 inch incision on the side of the chest, between the ribs, allowing wide access to the inside of the chest.

Video-assisted thoracoscopic lobectomy, or “VATS’s Lobectomy” is a technique in which the same cancer operation is done through 3 half inch incisions, using a small camera and specialized miniature equipment. The surgical team watches the procedure on TV monitors and is able to remove the involved lung without “opening up” the chest. This leads to much reduced pain post-operatively, less time in the hospital, and a much shorter recovery and quicker return to full activity. When fully recovered, the incisions can hardly be seen. Other advantages of the technique include fewer post-operative complications and improved ability to receive subsequent chemotherapy, if indicated.

This operation can be performed on most patients with early stage lung cancer and the results have been nothing short of amazing. Our patients have returned to normal activities and even work shortly after discharge in many cases, and their rapid recoveries have been gratifying to observe. We have a specialized nursing team, both in the operating room and on the post-op ward, to facilitate each patient’s surgery and recovery, as well as an active lung cancer tumor board to regularly review the treatment of all cases.

At Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, we will treat you compassionately, with a multi-disciplinary team, using the latest technology and established best practices, to deliver the best care possible.