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Valencia Practice Adopts New and Discreet STARR Weight-Loss Treatment

Town Center Surgery's Dr. Monali Misra praises privacy and comfort of new procedure, no visible scars.

VALENCIA, CALIF. – A man unfurls his beach towel atop the warm sand and gazes thoughtfully at the waves lapping gently at the shore. He stands up straight and cautiously removes his shirt.

So what happens next?

If the man is a patient of Dr. Monali Misra, he simply leaves his shirt on the towel and casually wades into the water. No one else on the beach has any idea that he has undergone abdominal surgery for obesity – because he bears no visible scars. He fights his private medical battle discreetly and with dignity.

“The World Health Organization recognized obesity as a disease decades ago, and like any fight against any disease, patients have the right to privacy when they are fighting obesity,” said Misra, a fellowship-trained bariatric surgeon who practices at Town Center Surgery in Valencia, Calif. “After my patient undergoes this treatment, he can go to the beach and take off his shirt without everyone noticing multiple scars. Battling weight is a private issue; no one needs to know about it.”

Misra and Town Center Surgery recently began offering patients the STARR Treatment. STARR – an acronym for Surgical Tiny Access and Rapid Recovery – allows Misra to perform gastric sleeve weight-loss surgery through a small, single incision made inside the patient's belly button. Previously, Misra had to make five to six incisions across a patient's abdomen to perform gastric sleeve surgery.

STARR Treatment is possible today thanks to two medical devices available through TransEnterix.

The company's SPIDER® System gives Misra access to the patient's abdomen via the belly button and then expands once inside it. Expansion allows Misra to operate at the surgical site using necessary angles and provides both 360-degree flexibility and proper left-right orient.

Misra also uses TransEnterix's SPIDER® MicroLap line of tools. Each MicroLap instrument is 2.7 millimeters in diameter – significantly smaller than the 5mm to 10mm typical for laparoscopic equipment. Because the tools are so small, Misra needs only use a special skin-incision pick; there's no scalpel and no open incisions. The patient comes away from the procedure with a barely visible, freckle-like mark.

Misra tried other “belly button” surgical platforms but quickly abandoned them because she felt they compromised patient safety by requiring surgeons to make too many concessions.

“Preceding systems didn't offer the same freedom of movement that SPIDER offers me; I felt like my hands were constantly fighting each another,” she said. “This platform allows me to see clearly inside the patient's abdomen and provides proper angulation. Ergonomically, it's more comfortable on my hands and arms. In designing these tools, TransEnterix clearly listened to surgeons.”

Patients benefit because they receive fewer and smaller incisions, which should increase their post-surgical comfort, hasten their recovery and result in scars visible only to them – if visible at all, Misra added.

“In many cases, patients can go home the same day,” she said. “They experience less pain and can return to work more quickly – which also supports their desire for privacy.”

About Dr. Monali Misra

Dr. Monali Misra, a board-certified surgeon, recently moved to sunny California from Ontario, Canada, where she served as assistant professor of surgery at McMaster University. She also served as co-director of the Bariatric Surgery Program and as associate director for the Center of Minimal Access Surgery at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario.

As co-founder and former director of the Canadian Institute of Bariatric Options, Misra led the comprehensive and multi-disciplinary outpatient weight-loss program that incorporated surgical, medical, psychological, nutritional and fitness treatment approaches. The program was among the first of its kind in Canada. She brought to her role an extensive educational

background in bariatric surgery, including completion of the advanced laparoscopic and bariatric surgical fellowship at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

A member of the American Society for Bariatric Surgery, Misra is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a member of both the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons and American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons.

About Town Center Surgery

Headed by board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Marc Lussier, Town Center Surgery is a comprehensive plastic surgery practice in Valencia, Calif., whose facilities have been certified by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, signifying the delivery of quality patient care compliant with nationally recognized standards.

Town Center Surgery provides a multi-disciplinary medical and surgical approach in care for patients fighting morbid obesity and trying to lose significant amounts of weight. The center offers bariatric, nutritional and mental-health counseling to support all stages of the weight-loss surgery process. To learn more, visit <http://www.towncentersurgeryweightloss.com/>

About TransEnterix

In less than three years, TransEnterix has evolved from a startup enterprise into a cutting-edge medical device company that has raised \$60 million in venture capital funding and successfully commercialized operations in the United States and European Union for its ground-breaking SPIDER Surgical System. SPIDER MicroLap is the exclusive U.S. distribution of Gimmi® AlphaDur®. TransEnterix partners with medical thought-leaders worldwide to rapidly develop pioneering technologies that advance minimally invasive surgery. Visit <http://www.transenterix.com>.