



# *CENTER FOR WOMEN'S CARE AND REPRODUCTIVE SURGERY*

*Gynecologic Endoscopic Surgery*

## *Hysterectomy Alternatives*

For years Northside Atlanta resident Anne B. Jarvis, a director at MCI, was told by doctors that she would never have a baby--or that if she ever did, it would be a miracle. In fact, she had been told since she was 24 that she should have a hysterectomy to treat benign fibroid tumors.

Among the causes for infertility are uterine fibroids, endometriosis, blocked Fallopian tubes or ovarian cysts.

As many as four of every ten women, and seven out of ten African-American women will develop uterine fibroids during their reproductive years. Although no one knows what is the exact cause of these benign growths of muscle cells in the uterine wall, their symptoms include heavy and erratic bleeding which can lead in severe cases to anemia. Some can cause abdominal pain and in rare cases (one in 1000) the tumors turn cancerous.

The growths can cause fertility problems by interfering with the implantation of the fertilized egg, and they have been implicated in miscarriages as well. When estrogen production stops at menopause, some fibroids tend to shrink, but others do not.

Anne and her husband Todd were determined to find an option that would help them realize their dream of having a family. Today the Jarvises delight in their son Knox, born in June 1995 after she opted for a treatment that left her uterus intact.

Her laparoscopic myomectomy was performed by Tom Lyons, M.D., an endoscopic surgery pioneer, who performs procedures at the Advanced Surgery Center of Georgia in Canton.

In January 1996, the former Denver Bronco, who also played football briefly for the Green Bay Packers, received the National Collegiate Athletes' Association Silver Anniversary Award recognizing him for the outstanding breakthroughs he has developed in his gynecological medicine practice since 1980.

He performed the minimally-invasive procedure to remove Anne's fibroids through a trocar, a small tubular instrument inserted into her abdomen. Because the incisions were so tiny, she recuperated from the procedure in approximately two weeks. Within months she was pregnant.

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"Infertility, problems with recurrent miscarriages and difficulty becoming pregnant are more common than we think," explained Dr. Lyons. "In the past, when myomectomy was performed as 'open' surgery, there was significant downtime for the patient and no guarantee of pregnancy. There aren't any strict guarantees today, but the new laparoscopic approach decreases the chances of problems in recovery," he said.

### New OPERA® Procedure for Abnormal Uterine Bleeding Spares Uterus

For women with abnormal uterine bleeding (AUB) who have already had children or don't want to sacrifice their uterus, Dr. Lyons is one of a handful of gynecological surgeons in the southeast who performs the new OPERA® procedure. The Outpatient Endometrial Resection and Ablation is an extremely viable alternative to hysterectomy. Although use of OPERA most often results in infertility, the OPERA system can also be used to precisely resect fibroids within the uterus and restore fertility in certain patients.

"AUB is a common condition that affects an estimated 10 million American women--9 to 14 percent of the female population over age 25," according to Dr. Lyons. Approximately two million women a year seek medical attention for the condition.

Using the OPERA procedure, the gynecologic surgeon is able to quickly and easily remove the uterine lining and any fibroids within the cavity. The OPERA system, developed by FemRx, makes the procedure simpler and safer by providing the surgeon improved visualization on a video monitor, automatic and continuous monitoring of fluid, and tissue collection for later evaluation.

"Clinical studies over the past 10 years have shown that the hour-long, outpatient procedure is successful in elimination or greatly reducing bleeding in 90 percent of cases or more," said Dr. Lyons.

The OPERA patient retains all her reproductive organs, and the procedure does not cause early menopause, as total hysterectomy does. Studies show the complication rate from OPERA is approximately one-tenth that of hysterectomy.

### Hope For Endometriosis Sufferers

Endometriosis, another medical condition where uterine tissue grows outside the uterus and creates painful implants and often infertility, has frequently been the cause for hysterectomy in the past.

Now Dr. Lyons offers a procedure called endoscopic excisional surgery which eliminates the diseased tissue with a less than 15 percent recurrence rate, unlike many endometriosis procedures where only the surface tissue is removed. "On the surface, endometrial tissue is like the tip of the iceberg. We get everything that's underneath, as well," said Dr. Lyons.

Many women have had up to six procedures to eliminate their endometriosis problem before they discover Dr. Lyons either through the internet and [e-mail](#) or from friends.

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Patients who have discovered the alternatives he offers have journeyed to Atlanta's Center for Women's Care & Reproductive Surgery from throughout the country and as far as Tokyo, Madrid and Buenos Aires.

"It's essential that patients get information about all their options," said Dr. Lyons. "Their own physician is the best place to start."

However, depending upon age and training, not all physicians are familiar with or able to perform some of the newer procedures. Dr. Lyons has trained physicians worldwide on the laparoscopic procedures he has developed, including the supracervical hysterectomy which renders better sexual function post-surgery; and the laparoscopic Burch procedure, which corrects urinary stress incontinence. He is reachable at (770) 352-0037 or toll-free at 1-888-545-0400.

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