

RESEARCH SUMMARY:

# Better Surgical Solutions for Canadian Women

*Dr. Lefebvre is leading the way in women's health.*

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At St. Michael's Hospital, women recovering from hysterectomies are going home often within 24 hours. They have smaller incisions, less scarring and fewer problems related to infection or delayed complications compared to the traditional approaches.

Why? St. Michael's Hospital is home to Dr. Guylaine Lefebvre, chief of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and a national leader in gynaecologic minimally invasive surgery. In the past few years, most of the patients operated for gynaecologic surgery at St. Michael's have benefited from a surgical approach that offers significant advantages over conventional surgery, including a faster recovery so women can resume their normal life quickly.

Now she's doing it with the help of a robot. In March 2008, St. Michael's Hospital became the first hospital in the GTA to acquire an advanced robotics system that treats patients with complex gynaecologic conditions. It means patients like 34-year-old Joanna McGuigan, who became the first patient in Canada to have a myomectomy—the surgical removal of uterine tumour—without compromising the uterus, can avoid open surgery. And in Joanna's case, still bear children. Thanks to Dr. Lefebvre's leadership, St. Michael's is the only hospital in Canada that has adopted this gynaecologic surgery technique using a robotics system.

She is also one of the reasons St. Michael's was able to raise \$6 million to renovate the Hospital's Women's Health Centre. This is a priority that Dr. Lefebvre says "will offer women of all ages and backgrounds one-stop access to specialized complex care."

Dr. Lefebvre is past president of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC), and is the current chair of the Risk Management Committee for gynecology. She has also been a member of the Women's Health Council of Ontario, the Medical Council of Canada Committee of Obstetrics and Gynecology and presently serves on the examination committee of the Royal College of Canada. In 2008, she received an honorary fellowship to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for her work in women's health.

But what drives Dr. Lefebvre is her patients. "There is nothing more gratifying than seeing a patient recover well," she says. "When a patient comes back to me and says 'life is better now,' I know that this is exactly where I want to be."

