

What is a robotic partial nephrectomy?

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The term for removing a piece of the kidney is a partial nephrectomy. Nowadays, there is a lot of emphasis on trying to remove just the growth and leaving as much functioning kidney tissue as possible. The procedure for a robotic partial nephrectomy starts off with general anaesthesia.

I always reassure patients this, you're asleep first. Once you're under general anaesthesia, we make five little holes or what we call port sites to put in the tubes or ports into the abdomen. Through those little holes, we put our instruments and the instruments and the ports are held onto by the robot.

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Once I'm sitting at the console to do the partial nephrectomy, there's various parts of the procedure we have to do. One is to get to the kidney and move other organs that are in the way out of the way. Then we have to control the blood vessels that feed the kidney.

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Each kidney gets about 10% of the overall blood flow from the heart and we have to control those blood vessels to do the operation safely. Once the kidney tumour is removed, we repair the kidney so that it can function well and not bleed and the patient can go about functioning with a kidney that's left mostly intact.