

## Somerset Medical Center - Healthy Edition Fall 2012

Mike and Linda Thompson of Annandale have been through a lot in 38 years of marriage, including moving to the United States from England and raising two now-grown children. So when Mike, 60, was diagnosed with prostate cancer last fall, it was only natural that they would face that challenge as a couple, too.

When Mike met to discuss treatment with Dhiren Dave, MD, a urologic surgeon with the Institute for Robotic Surgery at Somerset Medical Center, Linda sat by his side. "I wanted him to know that we're in this together," she says. The Thompsons appreciated how clearly Dr. Dave explained the options. "He never acted as if a question was silly," Linda says. "He was happy to discuss anything we brought up."

### **Minimizing Side Effects**

Ultimately, Mike opted for robotic prostate surgery. This state-of-the-art procedure is the most precise, least invasive way to remove a cancerous prostate. The system uses tiny, highly maneuverable instruments, which are inserted into the body through small incisions and controlled by the surgeon sitting at a nearby console. It provides greater range of motion than the human hand and high-definition, magnified vision.

"Using this system, surgeons are able to see tissues and blood vessels at a level of detail far beyond what's possible with other surgical methods," says Dr. Dave.

After surgery, Mike only had to stay in the hospital for one night. "I had some pain, but it was manageable with painkillers and lasted just a couple of days," Mike says. In contrast, the pain after traditional surgery may last for weeks.

"With robotic surgery, there's also less blood loss and scarring," says Dr. Dave. "Patients are able to return to their normal daily routine much faster than after traditional surgery."

### **Life After Prostate Surgery**

Following any prostate surgery, men may have problems with controlling urination and getting erections. Mike has experienced some minor problems with urinary control. "But it has been an occasional drip rather than a flood, and has steadily improved," he says. Issues with sexual function have been manageable with medication. "On balance, I'd say the impact on my life has been less than I feared," notes Mike.

Of course, priority number one was curing the prostate cancer. All signs in Mike's case have been encouraging. "Now that the children are grown, we're beginning a new stage of life together," says Linda. "I'm looking forward to all the years ahead."