

# ST. MARY *Medical Center*

News Release

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## **ST. MARY MEDICAL CENTER IMPLEMENTS NEW TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE PATIENT SAFETY IN THE O.R.**

HOBART, IN – St. Mary Medical Center is the first hospital in Northwest Indiana to begin using the new FDA-approved radio-frequency detection system for tracking and locating surgical sponges. The new patented technology, called RF Surgical Detection System™ scans and signals an alert if any Radio-Frequency Detect-tagged surgical sponge remains unaccounted for during surgery.

Nationwide, the retention of surgical sponges is one of the leading patient safety concerns in hospitals, according to a published study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The incidence occurs in one out of every 1,000 to 1,500 intra-abdominal operations.

The RF Surgical Detection System uses three key components: a handheld scanning wand connected to a compact, self-calibrating console and a micro RF tag which is embedded in a variety of surgical gauzes and sponges. When the system is activated and the wand is passed over a patient prior to closing procedures, an audible and visual alarm immediately signals the presence of any retained object(s) fitted with a tag.

“This new system provides an added layer of security to our already stringent patient safety practices,” says Glenn Carlos, MD, chairman of surgery at St. Mary Medical Center. “The new technology adds very little time or effort to the surgical process, and it will be used in addition to traditional tracking methods. It also offers great peace of mind to patients and their families.”

Stringent counting protocols are used in most O.R. settings with built-in safety measures and back-up procedures. If the count is off, the surgical staff is aware that a sponge is missing and must begin locating it prior to closing the patient. The RF Surgical Detection System enhances the counting method by validating a correct count or by allowing staff to immediately locate any missing sponges with a sweep of the wand. The system locates the missing sponges quickly and efficiently, with little or no delay to the surgery, a key point that minimizes the amount of time patients must remain under anesthesia.

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“We always want to be proactive when it comes to our patients’ well-being, and this system fits right in with our ongoing mission of excellence in patient care and safety,” says Janice Ryba, administrator and CEO. “By implementing this system to help prevent the occurrence and risk of retained surgical sponges, St. Mary Medical Center continues setting new standards of patient care and safety in the operating room and throughout the hospital.”



[CUTLINE]: Surgical nurse Vanessa Byczko, RN, at St. Mary Medical Center begins training on a new FDA-approved radio-frequency detection system for tracking and locating surgical sponges. The hospital is the first in Northwest Indiana to implement the system which will enhance the already stringent safety measures used in the operating rooms.

**About the RF Surgical Detection System**—The system consists of three components, which include the 24-hour reusable Blair-Port Wand® connected to a compact, self-calibrating console (provided free of charge) and a micro RF tag. The micro RF tag is embedded into a variety of surgical gauze, sponges and towels. When the system is activated and the wand is passed over a patient prior to closing procedures, and audible and visual alarm would immediately signal the presence of any retained object(s) fitted with a tag. The technology will not replace any other surgical procedure currently practiced in the OR, but will provide additional patient safety precautions.

**About RF Surgical Systems, Inc.**—RF Surgical Systems is a privately held medical device company headquartered in Bellevue, Washington and maintains engineering R & D facilities in San Diego, California. The concept of the RF Surgical Detection System originated over ten years ago by Dr. Jeffrey Port a Thoracic surgeon and Mr. William Blair an electrical engineer. The company’s RF Surgical Detection System is the first and only FDA-approved surgical sponge detection system on the market. The System has been used in over 640,000 surgical cases in more than 70 Hospitals and is the clear leader in preventing retained surgical sponges and gauze. For more information, please visit [www.rfsurg.com](http://www.rfsurg.com).