New technologies are improving pancreatic cancer treatment, offering hope to patients facing one of the least survivable forms of cancer. The Whipple procedure, a complex surgery for localized pancreatic cancer, can now be done robotically.

Dr. Zhi Ven Fong, a Mayo Clinic surgical oncologist, says innovations in technology allow surgeons to do this highly complex operation in a minimally invasive way. And that helps the patient. Dr. Fong explains what happens during a total robotic Whipple procedure.

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**Mayo Clinic Minute: Advancing pancreatic cancer treatment with total robotic Whipple surgery**

Video | Audio
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The Whipple procedure involves removing the head of the pancreas, part of the small intestine, gall bladder and bile duct. | "With the robotic approach, we believe that the incisions are smaller, the recoveries quicker and less pain."

Zhi Ven Fong, M.D. Surgical Oncology Mayo Clinic | During surgery, Mayo Clinic's Dr. Zhi Fong looks into a 3D camera while guiding the robot from a console.

"It provides me a three-dimensional image of the actual patient's abdomen through the camera." | Dr. Fong can then control the robotic arms that perform the intricate procedure.

The robotic surgery may take longer than traditional surgery, but it offers additional advantages. | "Shorter length of stay, and less long-term wound complications."

He says the best candidate for the surgery depends on the person and the cancer. | "Typically, patients have a lower BMI and the pancreatic cancers that don't involve the main visceral vessels that passes through the pancreas."

For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.