Walking into a surgical suite at The University of Kansas Hospital is like entering a scene from a televised medical drama. A cast of surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, scrub techs, residents and support personnel bustle between the 38 operating rooms at the main campus, treating adult and pediatric patients with complex surgical needs. In operating room after operating room, using the latest technology and surgical innovations, multidisciplinary teams of surgeons gather around patients with the most complicated surgical conditions in the region.

Collaborating for advanced care

“We encourage our surgeons to work collaboratively,” said James H. Thomas, MD, chair of the Department of Surgery. “It’s not unusual to see two or three surgeons working together so patients benefit from their vast experience and areas of expertise.”

In one operating room, a breast surgical oncologist teams up with plastic and microvascular surgeons to perform a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. In another, a patient with colorectal cancer undergoes simultaneous procedures on his colon and liver with a team of oncological and hepatobiliary surgeons. Yet another patient has his gallbladder removed using the latest robotic technology, da Vinci® Surgical System.

Across the hall, a patient has a stent replacement for an abdominal aortic aneurysm and vascular disease. And another undergoes a complicated and lengthy operation to treat pancreatic cancer. Most surgeons may see one or two such operations during their entire career. At The University of Kansas Hospital, specialized pancreatic surgical oncologists perform this operation weekly.
Experienced care for uncommon cases
Many patients with rare illnesses or advanced diseases need surgical treatments that demand such technical expertise. Yet few surgeons perform a significant number of these operations on a regular basis. Even fewer master them.

“That’s where we excel,” said Romano Delcore, MD, a surgeon who specializes in pancreatic surgical oncology.

“We have specialized surgeons who devote their practices exclusively to the treatment of esophageal and gastric cancer or advanced melanoma and sarcomas or endocrine surgery. Some focus on the latest robotic and minimally invasive technologies to treat conditions that once required open procedures.”

Higher volumes, better outcomes
Because of the volume of patients with complex cases cared for at The University of Kansas Hospital, our surgeons have developed expertise in specialties such as:

• Burn surgery
• Colorectal surgery
• Endocrine surgery
• Gastrointestinal and pancreatic surgery
• Minimally invasive/robotic surgery
• Neurosurgery
• Orthopedic surgery
• Pediatric surgery
• Plastic surgery
• Solid organ transplantation
• Surgical oncology, with specialists in each type of cancer
• Thoracic and cardiovascular surgery
• Trauma surgery
• Urological surgery
• Vascular and endovascular surgery

Rare surgeries are not rare at The University of Kansas Hospital. For example, our cancer specialists perform a unique reconstruction method following head and neck cancer surgery known as osteocutaneous radial forearm flap free tissue transfer. They harvest tissue and bone grafts from the patient’s forearm for implantation, resulting in natural reconstruction without unintended side effects. Our specialists perform this surgery more than any other surgeons in the world.

Joshua Mammen, MD, surgical oncologist, states, “Surgeons who specialize in the treatment of specific diseases and often perform these complex procedures have better results than those who perform such complex procedures only sporadically.”

Visit kumed.com/surgery for more information.