

Danbury Hospital News

A New Choice For Colonoscopy Preparation

DANBURY, CT – January 24, 2008 – People sometimes avoid a colon cancer screening because they fear the inconvenience of the cleansing preparation more than the colonoscopy itself.

Danbury Hospital is the first hospital in Connecticut and around the nation to offer an alternative method to cleanse the bowel to prepare for a colonoscopy – one that is more convenient, quicker, and eliminates having to drink a gallon of liquid laxatives the night before.

“Patients now have a choice,” said Joseph Fiorito, M.D., chief of the Section of Gastroenterology, a nationally recognized program at Danbury Hospital, the regional medical center and university teaching hospital.

The innovative new method is called colon hydrotherapy, a procedure that infuses warm, filtered, chemical-free water into the colon to cleanse it prior to colonoscopy, a life-saving screening that detects pre-cancerous polyps.

The infusion is done by a trained technician in a private room at the hospital, in a soothing atmosphere with little discomfort to the patients. Patients lie on a stretcher on their backs and sides for the 45-minute procedure that flushes water in and out of the colon prior to colonoscopy.

With colon hydrotherapy, patients can avoid the inconvenience and often messy preparation of drinking laxatives prior to the procedure. “Some people find the palatability of the liquid unacceptable,” said Dr. Fiorito. “Many people can’t tolerate drinking the gallon of liquid laxatives required the night before a colonoscopy to cleanse their colon.”

“Colon hydrotherapy is also much more convenient,” he added. “People don’t have to worry about having to miss work, not eat for 24 hours and stay up all night because of diarrhea.”

Colon cancer survivor Ethel Pancotti of Danbury is one of the people who colon hydrotherapy has greatly helped. She is among those who couldn’t tolerate the laxative process and would suffer loss of electrolytes, eventually passing out and ending up in the Emergency Department.

“With hydrotherapy, there’s no pain or discomfort,” she said. “I was so relaxed that I fell asleep listening to music during the cleansing procedure.”

This procedure is especially beneficial for the elderly, said Dr. Fiorito, who sometimes can’t tolerate the volume of liquid that they need to drink, along with feeling side effects from the laxatives. They’re also more prone to electrolyte abnormalities and kidney damage from the laxative cleansing process.

Doctors recommend having a colonoscopy beginning at age 50, and sooner if patients have a history of colon cancer in the family, or other risk factors. For more information, visit www.danburyhospital.org, or see your doctor.

Danbury Hospital is a 371-bed regional medical center and university teaching hospital associated with New York Medical College, the Yale University School of Medicine, the Connecticut School of Medicine and Columbia University Medical Center. It provides centers of excellence in cardiovascular services, cancer, weight-loss surgery, orthopedics, digestive disorders and radiology, with specialized programs for sleep disorders and asthma management. More than 95 percent of the medical staff are board certified in their specialties.

It is ranked in the top 5 percent of hospitals in the country for overall clinical performance by HealthGrades®, an independent health-care rating organization, for 2005 through 2007. In addition, Danbury Hospital is a recognized leader named among the nation’s 100 Top Hospitals® by Solucient, a leading national source of health care business intelligence.

It is No. 1 in Connecticut for overall gastrointestinal (GI) services and only one of seven hospitals in New England to be ranked among the top 5 percent for overall GI services.