

Screening that Can Stop Cancer in Its Tracks

Akron Digestive Disease Consultants serves patients with state-of-the-art techniques and experience, saving lives and much more in the process.



Pictured (l to r): Ganesh R. Veerappan, MD, FACC, AGAF; William F. Shaheen, MD; Edward J. Esber, MD, FACC, FASGE; Arjun Venkat, MD, MPH; Nicole King, CNP; and Costas H. Kefalas, MD, MMM, FACC, FASGE, AGAF

The American Cancer Society now recommends that women without a family history of colon cancer be screened once every 10 years beginning at the age of 45, since colon polyps, which can be precursors to cancer, are now found in one in every four women—regardless of family history.

Given that colorectal cancer is now the second-leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States, screening is the key to stopping it from taking the top spot. But some women balk at the idea of getting a colonoscopy—if not because of the procedure itself, then because of the hassle that comes with a trip to the hospital. Between finding a

place to park, navigating maze-like hallways, and then receiving a potentially significant bill, these places of healing can feel intimidating.

By comparison, Akron Digestive Disease Consultants (ADDC) couldn't be more convenient. The practice has its own surgical center, which saves its patients time and money. And, with a 95 percent satisfaction rate (based on patient surveys), ADDC is also saving its patients countless headaches.

"We strive to have a patient-focused practice," says Dr. Costas Kefalas, a partner in the practice. "We believe in addressing patient concerns in a timely manner and getting results and information back to them as soon as possible. We take the patient experience very seriously."

Altogether, ADDC can boast of more than 80 years of combined experience among its five practitioners, each of whom has undergone multiple fellowships in their training to become specialists within the field of gastroenterology. In addition to practicing medicine, each ADDC

physician is involved in the training of the next generation of doctors at Northeast Ohio Medical University; in fact, two of the practice's physicians lead the university's gastrointestinal division. ADDC doctors also work in leadership positions in regional and national associations of gastroenterologists, overseeing and contributing to the growth of the specialization's body of knowledge.

Invisible No More

In addition to screening for and treating colon polyps and cancer, ADDC treats ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, and gastric reflux. A major focus of the practice is fatty liver—which has surpassed alcohol consumption as the top cause of liver disease, liver transplants, and liver cancer in the United States. Diabetes, high cholesterol, thyroid disease, and obesity—all more common among women—are risk factors for fatty liver.

Thankfully, at ADDC it's also easy to catch. Fatty liver can be detected using a FibroScan®—a pain-free, noninvasive body scan that can immediately provide doctors with the exact amount of scarring and fat in a liver, information doctors can use to formulate treatment plans and to track progress towards patient goals.

"This is a silent killer, and it's absolutely imperative that we identify fatty liver before it becomes clinically consequential," says Dr. Arjun Venkat, ADDC's liver disease specialist. "Most people are blissfully unaware of this being an epidemic."

AKRON/CANTON HEALTHCARE PROFILES



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