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LEESBURG | THE VILLAGES | TAVARES | CLERMONT

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Now Available... A Camera Inside a Pill

Local Gastroenterologists Bring Revolutionary Diagnostic Procedure to Region

The doctor's adage, "take two pills and call me in the morning", may not apply to the Pillcam™, but this small, ingestible capsule containing a tiny video camera, is the latest medical breakthrough available locally to help physicians diagnose patients with a range of suspected conditions of the small intestine. And it may save lives.

This revolutionary technology, known as capsule endoscopy, is being performed for the first time in the region by gastroenterologists of Professional Gastroenterology & Surgery Associates, who have offices in Leesburg, The Villages, Tavares and Clermont.

"Capsule endoscopy allows visualization of the entire small intestine for the first time," said Akram Ismail, M.D. "It allows us to see places we've only been able to really see using surgery, and is significantly more effective in filling the gap between upper G.I. endoscopy and colonoscopy than traditional imaging methods."

The patient arrives at the office, and has some monitor leads attached with adhesive to his or her abdomen. The patient then swallows the capsule which transmits images to a recording device strapped to his or her waist. The capsule makes its way through the 20-plus feet of small intestine, pinpointing causes of gastrointestinal symptoms," notes Dr. Ismail. "It is minimally invasive and the patient goes about his or her regular routine during the process."

The capsule takes two images per second of the lower intestine between the stomach and colon. The doctor then transfers the data from the recording device to a

computer for review. The images are clear enough to detect abnormalities as small as one-tenth of a millimeter in size. The capsule is expelled naturally and is a disposable, one-time-use product. Cost is considerably less than repeated traditional treatment or surgery.

It takes Dr. Ismail about 45 minutes to watch the footage of the camera's travel through the intestinal system. The computer automatically edits out periods of inactivity. Onscreen, he sees a high resolution, near-video image of the intestine, as well as a map of the intestine with a representation of the camera pinpointing its location. He can isolate segments of the footage for closer inspection.

In clinical trials, capsule endoscopy was demonstrated to be twice as effective in establishing new diagnoses, confirming existing diagnoses, verifying the extent of disease and ruling out suspicion of Crohn's disease, as barium radiography. It has also been effective in ruling out the presence of suspected lesions.

"The Pillcam is on track for becoming a first-line diagnostic tool for gastroenterologists around the world," said Dr. Ismail. "We are excited to bring this technology to the people of Lake, Sumter and South Marion counties."

