

# The Inside Story

## ELMS DIGESTIVE DISEASE SPECIALISTS



**PEOPLE OFTEN USED TO BE** reluctant to speak of their digestive issues or to seek help early enough when unusual symptoms occurred. Now, they are more apt to take charge of their health care, opting to eat healthier, exercise and, yes, schedule a colonoscopy. An increasing number of people choose Elms Digestive Disease Specialists to manage chronic conditions as well as preventive care.

BY BARBARA PATRICK

Elms Digestive Disease Specialists is the only free-standing endoscopy center in the North Charleston area. Office Manager Peggy Tinnin, RN, explained that patients find it more convenient to go to Elms Digestive instead of to a hospital for tests such as colonoscopies or endoscopies.

“The main things we see are acid reflux, constipation, diarrhea or rectal bleeding. Sometimes patients come in because they have a family history of polyps or colon cancer,” she said. “We also see patients who suffer from chronic conditions such as Crohn’s disease.”

Patients sometimes worry that the procedures might be uncomfortable, but Tinnin said there is no cause for concern.

“We offer a painless procedure,” Tinnin said. “Patients receive IV sedation and just don’t remember anything.”

In addition to colonoscopies, the Elms Endoscopy Center also performs upper endoscopies and capsule endoscopies, which involve the patient swallowing a small camera for a detailed look at the small intestine.

About half of the patients schedule a colonoscopy because of a specific complaint. Other patients in good health who want a screening may



Elms Digestive Disease Specialists has a state-of-the-art facility located in Summerville, S.C.

take advantage of Elms Digestive’s direct access colonoscopy. This is as simple as speaking to one of the colon cancer screening nurses, who will set up an appointment and call the necessary prescriptions in to your local pharmacy. Typically, routine screenings start at age 50 or, if there is a family history of specific diseases, at age 40.

But even more important than advanced diagnostic tests and new medications that help treat chronic

conditions such as Crohn’s or ulcerative colitis are the people of Elms Digestive Specialists.

“I think patients do want to take charge of their health care,” she said. “A lot of patients call on their own to schedule a colonoscopy. They’ve heard about colon cancer and are pro-active.”

Dr. Gregory Goodear agreed with Tinnin, saying the biggest lesson he has learned from his patients is to listen.

“Take the time to listen to your patient and they will lead you to the diagnosis,” Goodear said.

Goodear and the other five physicians each see roughly 20 patients every day – sometimes more – they make every effort to spend the time. They also reserve a few appointments each day for patients who call in with a serious concern or a frightening symptom.

“We don’t believe you need to wait to see a specialist,” Goodear explained. “We can often see you the same day.”

Perhaps the most satisfying part of being a physician is the ability to help people.

“You get to help people who didn’t even know they were sick simply by performing a colonoscopy and removing a polyp,” Goodear

exclaimed. “Fifty-thousand die of colon cancer each year, 750 alone in South Carolina. Those numbers can be drastically reduced.”

*Elms Digestive Disease Specialists and Elms Endoscopy Center are located at 2671 Elms Plantation Boulevard, near Charleston Southern University. More information on services and doctors can be found at [www.ElmsDigestive.com](http://www.ElmsDigestive.com). To schedule an appointment, call (843) 797-6800.*