

Media Statement - Netcare

Netcare Pinehaven Hospital

Media release

Scoping procedure can detect and treat colorectal cancers at an early stage

Those over the age of 50 and at high risk should have a colonoscopy

Thursday, 26 November 2020, Colorectal cancer has been identified by the South African National Cancer Registry as being the fourth most commonly diagnosed cancer and the sixth leading cause of cancer deaths in the country.¹ It is also the second most commonly diagnosed cancer among men and the fourth among women in South Africa.²

“Colorectal cancer can, however, be detected early by having a regular routine scoping procedure, known as a colonoscopy, during which any pre-cancerous polyps can be removed before they become a more serious health threat,” says Dr Pieter Swart, a general surgeon who practises at Netcare Pinehaven Hospital in Krugersdorp, Johannesburg. He has established an outpatient endoscopic facility at his rooms at the hospital.

“There are a few tests used to detect colon cancer, however, a colonoscopy, is one of the better-known and is today a routine procedure involving the colon being investigated by means of a scoping device. This is used not only to detect cancer and pre-cancerous polyps in the gut, but also to remove the polyps before they become cancerous, as well as any abnormal tissue. Colon cancers that are detected at an early stage tend to be most amenable to treatment, and an endoscopic investigation can be absolutely life-saving,” he explains.

A polyp is a grape-like growth that quite commonly occurs in an adult’s colon or rectum and most are harmless. However, some polyps known as adenomas are considered pre-cancerous and may well develop into cancer if they are not removed.

Dr Pieter Swart says that a colonoscopy should be undertaken in persons who are 50 years or older and at average risk of colon cancer, and every 10 years thereafter. However, your doctor may recommend that you are scoped at a younger age and/or more often than every 10 years should you have a family history of colon cancer, as a genetic predisposition is an important risk factor for developing colon cancer. More regular colonoscopies may also be advised if large pre-cancerous polyps have been identified previously. Your doctor can advise when you should begin screening and what tests will be most suitable in your case.

“A colonoscopy is also used to examine the causes of various other intestinal problems such as rectal bleeding, abdominal pain and chronic constipation or diarrhoea. Tissue samples, or biopsies, can also be obtained during a colonoscopy, and sent for further testing to check whether they are cancerous.

“There are minimal risks associated with a colonoscopy, but there is a possibility of bleeding, inflammation, infection, or of the colon being perforated. However, these problems are rare and the

The Netcare Group. Providing YOU with the best and safest care



You're in safe hands



benefits of the investigation are clear, particularly in those patients with a high risk of developing colon cancer.

“The procedure itself takes approximately 30 minutes and is usually relatively painless, although it can be a little uncomfortable. No hospital stay is required but, as the procedure requires sedation, someone needs to drive you home.”

Dr Swart says that while more complex investigations and procedures are performed within the theatres at Netcare Pinehaven Hospital, his new outpatient endoscopic facility there is able to perform a range of more minor procedures including investigations into intestinal bowel syndrome, hernia repair, and haemorrhoid procedures.

“Patients appreciate the fact that they can have these minor investigations and procedures at our outpatient facility. We have an experienced anaesthetist working at the facility full time, who is responsible for sedating patients,” he concludes.

Ends

1,2 References available on request.

To contact Dr Pieter's Swart's practice please call 011 9534163.

To find out more about the services offered through Netcare hospitals and other of the Group's facilities, please contact Netcare's customer service centre either by email at customer.service@netcare.co.za or phone 0860 NETCARE (0860 638 2273). Note that the centre operates Mondays to Fridays from 08:00 to 16:00.

Looking for a medical appointment? Netcare appointmed™ will make appointments with specialists practising at Netcare hospitals, GPs and dentists at Medicross medical and dental centres, and specialists at Akeso mental health facilities for YOU. Simply phone Netcare appointmed™ on 0860 555 565, Mondays to Fridays between 08:00 and 17:00, or go online at www.netcare.co.za/Request-a-medical-appointment to request an appointment.

For more information on this media release, contact MNA at the contact details listed below.

Issued by: MNA on behalf of Netcare Pinehaven Hospital
Contact: Martina Nicholson, Graeme Swinney, Meggan Saville and Estene Lotriet-Vorster
Telephone: (011) 469 3016
Email: connect@mnapr.co.za, martina@mnapr.co.za, graeme@mnapr.co.za, meggan@mnapr.co.za or estene@mnapr.co.za

The Netcare Group. Providing YOU with the best and safest care

