

Colonoscopy clinic trumpets benefits of prevention

The Caledon Enterprise
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Courtesy Brampton Guardian

The idea of having a doctor poke and prod at private parts can be an uncomfortable notion for some people. But suffering a little embarrassment may not be so bad if it means catching a life-threatening illness before it's too late.

At least that's the message being touted by a group of doctors at a new colonoscopy clinic that opened last month in east Brampton.

"I think people have to realize that everybody has a colon and everybody is susceptible to colon cancer," said Dr. Vinod Puri, one of six gastroenterologists operating out of 470 Chrysler Dr. near Williams Parkway and Torbram Road. "This isn't a condition for any sub segment of the population. It's a condition that impacts everyone equally. If it's embarrassing for John it's no more or less embarrassing for Frank or Bill or anybody else. Everybody has the same risk."

Colon cancer ranks just behind lung cancer as the leading cause of cancer-related deaths for people over age 50.

"In Brampton and surrounding area," Puri said, "there are about 150,000 to 200,000 people that are of the age when they should get tested."

But a number of issues including accessibility and 'the comfort factor' sometimes inhibit individuals from getting treatment.

"To that end," Puri said, "doctors have done their best to make the experience as pleasant as possible by making the facility feel more like a spa than a clinic."

Now he is spreading the word.

"Our goal is to provide easy access for patients to have colonoscopies," Puri said. "Lives may be saved as people will become more informed about prevention and early detection of colon cancer. Hopefully, they will ask their family doctors to arrange for this test."

He said doctors are confident this new clinic will boost the number of procedures performed.

"There is sort of a discrepancy in terms of the demand and supply so we took it upon ourselves to actually do something about that," said Puri. His is the first endoscope clinic in Brampton.

"The reason this can work is because there are six of us and we want to do a lot of volume," Puri added. "The whole impetus for doing this in the first place is we saw an opportunity to actually make an impact on this community that will be felt for generations. Cancer is something people don't forget. We hope to put a huge dent on the overall risk of cancer at least in the Brampton area."

Puri said in his experience there are several reasons why patients are reluctant to get this test done. They are either afraid of the pain or the invasiveness of the test.

"Some people may just be petrified of what a doctor may find," Puri conceded. "Yes, they have to go through discomfort...but it's one day out of their lives and it could make an enormous difference," Puri said.

The clinic runs six days a week and services are covered by OHIP. Caledon residents are welcomed as patients.

Call (905) 790-9030 for more information or visit www.scopeclinic.com.