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TOP NOTCH

“It’s exciting that we don’t have to limit ourselves to just one place. We are where you need us to be.” – Prashant Krishnan, MD

Peak Gastroenterology leads the way in southern Colorado’s digestive care

BY HANNAH BLICK, LEADING MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

If your digestive tract is a mystery, consider the team at Peak Gastroenterology your private investigators. Not only do its members have decades of experience and state-of-the-art equipment to solve whatever case of gastrointestinal (GI) issue you might be experiencing, but their passion for caring for the community is unmatched.

“Our focus is our patients and their well being, that’s always our priority,” said Prashant Krishnan, MD, gastroenterologist at Peak Gastroenterology, 2222 N. Nevada Avenue, Suite 5001. “In fact, we redesigned our entire website from the ground up to focus on one thing: YOU, the patient.”

Peak Gastroenterology has been consistently adding new physicians to its roster, including five new GI experts in the last two years, making it the fastest growing gastrointestinal practice in the area. Robert Christopher Harmon, MD, PhD; Lukasz Kowalczyk, MD; Vanessa Lee, MD; James Rose, MD; and Anju Sidhu, MD, bring Peak Gastroenterology’s numbers to 11 doctors and two nurse practitioners. “We’re twice as large as the second-largest gastrointestinal office in town,” Dr. Krishnan said. “And we’re planning to expand.”

The practice is building a brand-new center at the corner of Fillmore Street and Cascade Avenue and expects to open there in June. The new location will feature three floors of services, including a state-of-the-art endoscopy center, an internal medicine office, and a full-service gastroenterology clinic. “The entire building has been designed with the patients’ experience in mind,” Dr. Krishnan said. “We want to focus on the experience from the time they walk in the door to the moment they walk out.”

DIGESTIVE DETAILS

Each of the newest physicians bring fresh specialties to the table, from knowledge of pelvic floor dysfunction — Dr. Kowalczyk can perform InterStim, a procedure that alleviates fecal incontinence — to experience performing therapeutic endoscopies, which are traditionally performed only in the prestigious university medical setting. Peak Gastroenterology also houses experts in GI issues like liver disease, celiac disease and food sensitivities, and inflammatory bowel diseases like Crohn’s disease. “We’re the only group in southern Colorado that can truly do everything,” Dr. Krishnan said. The team is also a healthy blend of ages, ranging from the early thirties to the late sixties, which Dr. Krishnan cites as a perfect combination of technical expertise and tried-and-true experience. There are also several Colorado Springs natives on the team, giving the doctors and staff a finger on the pulse of the community.

Gastroenterology deals with the entire digestive tract, including esophagus, stomach, small intestines, colon, pancreas, liver, and bile ducts. “Basically, we try to find out why people are having certain gastrointestinal issues in a nonsurgical and less-invasive way,” Dr. Krishnan said. Gastroenterologists see patients with cases of GI tract bleeding, heartburn, nausea, vomiting, swallowing issues, diarrhea, constipation, and more, employing scopes to view internal organs and diagnose problems.

As your personal digestive detective, Peak Gastroenterology has an arsenal of equipment to get to the bottom of your problem. To view the esophagus, stomach and first section of the small intestines, doctors insert a scope through the mouth, called an

esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD). To view the colon and last part of the small intestines, the scope enters the body through the rectal cavity. Another strategy sends the scope through the mouth to view the bile duct; this is called an Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) and is a more technical procedure. The Peak Gastroenterology team can also see the entire small intestines by having the patient swallow a capsule with a camera in it, called video capsule endoscopy.

One of Peak Gastroenterology’s newest additions, Dr. Harmon, is capable of performing an endoscopic ultrasound, which uses sound to create images that allow doctors to see through intestinal walls. “It’s a highly complicated procedure, but he performs it beautifully,” Dr. Krishnan said. Buck Patel, MD, the practice’s founder, also has the skill and experience to perform SpyGlass and single-balloon enteroscopy, both technically sophisticated procedures.

LOCAL LEADERS

Peak Gastroenterology is pushing the boundaries of technology to help patients. Typical GI scopes have one camera that gives doctors 170-degree visibility, but ridges and folds inside the colon make it difficult to see behind each crevice. In November 2014, Peak Gastroenterology invested in Fuse endoscopes, a brand-new, state-of-the-art scope made by EndoChoice, the leader in GI medical equipment. The new scope has three cameras and can see 330 degrees — almost twice the visibility of a regular scope. “We are the only practice in Colorado to have this, and the eighteenth in the U.S. to have it,” Dr. Krishnan said. “As a group, we decided it’s important to invest in a piece like this to help our patients.”

PEAK GASTROENTEROLOGY

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The new scope leads to a 69 percent increase in polyp detection, which is how colon cancer is often discovered and diagnosed. “We expect to see a significant decrease in colon cancer,” Dr. Krishnan said. “We’ve already had several instances with the new scope where we’re confident we would’ve missed something without it.”

Peak Gastroenterology has been serving Colorado Springs for more than 20 years, when Dr. Patel joined the existing practice and built it into the local digestive powerhouse it is today. The practice serves a large geographic area, with exclusive coverage in Castle Rock at the Castle Rock Adventist Hospital. The doctors also have strong relationships with both local hospital systems and receive referrals from both. “It’s exciting that we don’t have to limit ourselves to just one place,” Dr. Krishnan said. “We are where you need us to be.” Peak Gastroenterology is also the GI provider for Colorado Springs Health Partners (CSHP) — the largest medical practice in Colorado Springs. With new doctors, improved technology and a fresh start in an advanced facility, 2015 looks to be a banner year for Peak Gastroenterology. “We are really excited to be able to offer even more to our patients,” Dr. Krishnan said. “And to save more lives, that’s really what it comes down to.” After all, solving your digestive issues is all in a day’s work for the team at Peak Gastroenterology — it’s elementary, dear Watson. +