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Smithville, Texas 78957

SMITHVILLE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HYDROTHERMABLATION

An Outpatient Surgical Solution for Age-old "Female" Problem

By John J. Costello, MD, specializing in Obstetrics and Gynecology

Until fifteen years ago, women experiencing heavy menstrual flows (menorrhagia) had few choices for a permanent cure. A hysterectomy was an option, but it involved major surgery and six weeks of recuperation. Today, there is a more effective and far safer method of treating this condition.

Hydrothermablation, a simple procedure, can be performed on an outpatient basis. The treatment essentially bathes the interior of the uterus with a heated saline solution which sears the uterine walls, preventing future menstrual flows. Only the uterus is affected and the ovaries continue to make hormones as usual. Because there is no incision, very little discomfort follows this procedure, and patients can return to regular activity the next day.

Doctors are noting lower complication rates and higher success rates with hydrothermablation than with previous types of procedures. Studies have shown that 50% of women having this particular procedure still experience no menstrual flow five years later, and the other 50% have much less bleeding and discomfort than they had before.

There is a downside to hydrothermablation. Women wishing to have children should not undergo this operation since it permanently modifies the uterine lining by removing the cells which would nourish the fertilized egg. As ovulation continues to occur, however, hydrothermablation should not be seen as an effective birth control method, and other conception prevention methods should be considered.

It should be noted that there are other ways of treating women experiencing heavy menstrual cycles which do not compromise future child bearing potential. Uterine polyps and fibroids can be removed by using a hysteroscope, a tool that allows direct visualization of the inner surface of the uterus. Some women complaining of a heavy menstrual flow may actually have bleeding disorders similar to hemophilia. Once diagnosed, these conditions are treatable with medications that return them to normal menstrual flow patterns.

For more complete information concerning this topic, please contact your personal physician.

SIDE BAR: Dr. John Costello has performed this procedure for more than twelve years and has found that most women having a hydrothermablation are happy with their results. Dr. Costello offices at the Bastrop Medical Center, 441 Hwy. 71, Bastrop, Texas, and is an active medical staff member at Smithville Regional Hospital. You may reach him at 512-304-0311.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
MARKETING DEPARTMENT
SMITHVILLE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY
512-360-2121