When a specialist is needed, travel doesn’t have to be.

Colonoscophobia? Stop putting it off. You’ll be glad you did.

Dietary tune-up can jump-start your GI health.

OSF GI specialists’ manner makes patients feel special.

Page 4
Six new reasons why the best care is even better.

Now seeing patients in Pontiac!

David Rzepczynski, MD, and Omar Khokhar, MD, of OSF Medical Group - Gastroenterology in Bloomington, are now seeing patients on Mondays and Wednesdays at OSF Saint James - John W. Albrecht Medical Center.

Services include pancreatic disease, liver disease, esophageal disorders, celiac disease, ulcers, hepatitis, and gall bladder and biliary tract disorders. Procedures performed at OSF Saint James include both screening and diagnostic colonoscopy and more.

Call 309-665-4040 for more information or to schedule an appointment at either location.

OSF Medical Group - Gastroenterology
2500 West Reynolds Street, Pontiac

osfmedicalgroup.org
Welcome to our 16th edition of Harmony magazine!

Every year, millions of Americans face gastrointestinal and urological issues, from as mild as heartburn to as severe as cancer. The discomfort and inconveniences can disrupt home, family, and work lives. But even mild symptoms should not be ignored. A remedy is often possible, and the sooner the symptoms are checked out and addressed, the better.

Fortunately, OSF Medical Group and OSF Saint James – John W. Albrecht Medical Center are well-staffed with primary care and specialty physicians who can identify the causes, use evidence-based treatments and tap into OSF Saint James’ physical therapy, dietary, surgery and other specially trained staff to get patients back to their normal lives.

In this issue, read about the internal medicine and pediatrics physician joining us this fall, and meet the new OSF urologist and OSF gastroenterologists now seeing patients in Pontiac. Learn about the incontinence therapy service that uses new techniques without surgery, and get to know our registered dietitian whose passion for helping people with gluten intolerance was born out of her own battle with celiac disease.

We’ve included tools and information you need to take control of your health and become a more engaged healthcare consumer, such as shopping tips, how-to pointers on journaling habits, symptoms to share with your doctor, and more.

Enjoy your summer!

Trent Proehl, MD, FACS
OSF Medical Group General Surgery, Pontiac
Chief Medical Officer, OSF Saint James – John W. Albrecht Medical Center
OSF GI specialists’ manner makes patients feel special

When a diagnosis of colon cancer sent Dawn Hanson’s life into a tailspin last winter, she relied on Dr. Omar Khokhar to guide her through. The OSF Medical Group gastroenterology specialist supplied the skills and expertise – and more.

“He was very good at immediately putting us at ease,” recalled Hanson, who tearfully accepted the doctor’s reassurances that “they would do all that could and needed to be done. They made sure that all of me was taken care of, from the emotional to the physical.”
The 48-year-old Pontiac legal secretary appreciated Dr. Khokhar’s attempts to cheer her up and relieve her anxiety with a gentle humor that restored her natural buoyancy and confidence.

She also relished being enveloped by an office staff that, “from the receptionist to the lab lady, was pleasant and happy”, she said. “When you’re coming into a medical office already scared out of your mind, seeing a pleasant face means a lot!”

**Surrounded by experts in “bedside manner”**

After her first-ever colonoscopy revealed a mass, she was scheduled for surgery. No time was wasted in “getting me in and getting it taken care of.” Like Dr. Khokhar, colorectal surgeon Dr. Travis Holt was “fabulous, patient, and answered all our questions.” Dawn expected to make a full recovery.

From her bedside, Dawn’s husband, David - an aspiring nurse - received a tutorial in patient care. “They’re taught how to make a patient comfortable and at ease – and having him there definitely did that for me.”

After a tearful pause, she added. “He’s my rock that gets me through everything.”

After Hanson began experiencing symptoms last fall, she consulted her OSF Medical Group Pontiac primary care physician, Dr. Tom Murphy, who ordered tests and referred her to Dr. Khokhar in Bloomington.

**Going the distance to shave distance**

Dr. Khokhar is even closer at hand now that he and his associate, Dr. David Rzepczynski, have established clinic hours at OSF Saint James – John W. Albrecht Medical Center. Surgeon Dr. Holt has been available in Pontiac for almost a year, and a third gastroenterology associate is expected later this year.

Drs. Khokhar and Rzepczynski believe distance shouldn’t prevent Pontiac area patients from getting the treatment they need for gastrointestinal disorders, ulcers, appendicitis and dysfunctions of the gallbladder, liver or colon.

Most GI procedures can be performed in the ground-floor surgery suites at OSF Saint James, where patients can enjoy the convenience of staying near home and close to family, surrounded by hospital staff they know and within reach of their primary care providers.
Specialists make new techniques available

Dr. Khokar and Dr. Rzepczynski bring impeccable credentials to their practice. Khokhar received training through the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and Dr. Rzepczynski through Loyola and Northwestern universities.

Due to Dr. Khokhar’s advanced training in endoscopic ultrasound and esophageal ablation techniques, these two advanced procedures, which had been available only in Peoria or at larger metro facilities, will be performed in Bloomington.

Understanding begins with U

Clear communication with patients is important to both Dr. Khokar and Dr. Rzepczynski.

“I want patients to understand what I think is going on and why I’ve written a prescription or ordered a test. We make the decision together, both of us understanding why we’re making this decision.”

“I want patients to understand what I think is going on and why I’ve written a prescription or ordered a test,” Dr. Khokhar said. “We make the decision together, both of us understanding why we’re making this decision.”

“People shouldn’t be afraid to ask questions,” said Dr. Rzepczynski, who is known to staff and patients as “Dr. R.”

“He doesn’t let me leave the office unless he’s guaranteed everything’s OK and that we’ve talked about my worries and concerns,” verified Arthur Miles of Chenoa, whom Rzepczynski recently treated for hepatitis-C.

Though after two decades the disease took some toll on the 44-year-old machine operator’s liver, he responded well to medication that is expected to stem further deterioration.

After overcoming alcohol addiction and the suicides of two brothers, the medical treatment’s side effects are endurable, Miles said, because “it will add years to my life.”

Dr. Rzepczynski said expanding OSF Saint James’ services is great for “people in Pontiac and Chenoa and places in between. They like the convenience of having a specialist at the hospital they frequent.”

Dear Diary …

If you can keep a journal of your innermost thoughts, why not of the innermost workings of your body?

Writing down your habits and symptoms can help you and your physician unlock what’s going on inside your body. If sitting on the doctor’s exam table is apt to make you nervous and forgetful, a written record can remind you of details that can help your doctor analyze what’s wrong.

You can use a journal for any medical complaint. Here are some suggestions relating to gastrointestinal or urological concerns:

- What problem are you experiencing? (Heartburn, diarrhea, constipation, incontinence, difficulty urinating?)
- When did your problem begin? How? Was it associated with anything?
- What makes the problem worse, or better?
- Has there been any change in your habits, your urine flow or color, your stool size, smell or color? Do you urinate without warning?
- How often do you feel the urge to use the restroom?
- Did you take any medication to help? Does it? Note what, how often, and results. Document the types and times.
- How does this affect your life? Are you concerned something more could be wrong?
For John Lyons, nothing beats a day of fishing. But lately, he’d been experiencing a problem that was preventing him from enjoying his favorite pastime, and the problem wasn’t a lack of bites. It turned out he had an enlarged prostate that was causing him discomfort, a problem not uncommon for men his age. Untreated, the condition could have worsened. “The bladder has to work harder to empty, and it doesn’t completely. The pressure backs up and begins to affect the kidneys,” said Lyons’ urologist, Dr. Mariano Tolentino, an OSF Medical Group specialist in Pontiac and Bloomington.

Through an exam procedure known as a cystoscopy, Dr. Tolentino determined the mild enlargement was merely a product of aging, not due to malignancy, and could be treated with medication. The diagnosis relieved the 51-year-old quarry worker from Cornell, and leaves him free to pursue fishing and to enjoy a blended family that includes wife, Susan, two children and two stepchildren.
He credits a “lightning moment with God” for his optimistic outlook. “I think more about what I can do to reflect positively on the people around me,” he said. “There’ll still be sorrow and heartache, but light is really bright at the end of the tunnel, and things will get better.”

‘An easy guy to talk to’

Lyons said he emerged from his visits with Tolentino wiser and better informed about the condition. “I liked the way he conversed. He explained things very well. He was an easy guy to talk to.”

Communication is a hallmark of his practice, Tolentino said. “I take the time to explain. I draw stuff to explain the problems and the surgery.” As he spoke, his hands were in motion, illustrating his points when no pen or paper exists.

A founding member of Urologic Surgery Associates in Bloomington, Tolentino expanded urology services in Pontiac last fall. He’s a familiar face to patients in the area, having consulted at the Pontiac and Ottawa hospitals and others in the region over an 18-year career in Central Illinois.

He appreciates that his latest assignment brings him to a modern OSF Saint James-John W. Albrecht Medical Center. “It’s totally different because it’s a new hospital,” but some of the physicians are old friends.

In addition to treating urinary tract issues in men and women, Tolentino specializes in treating male fertility issues. He said patients are more willing to discuss the sensitive subjects. “Before, men accepted prostate issues as a part of aging. Now they realize they don’t have to suffer.”

Hometown care, but a click away from metro services

Being available in Pontiac means being able to serve patients closer to home while giving them access to larger metro medical facilities.
A prompt diagnosis right here in Pontiac – and the right medication – got John back to the fishing he loves.

“The nuts and bolts can easily be done here in Pontiac, where it’s more convenient for them and they don’t have to travel,” Dr. Tolentino said. “If we’re facing a bigger problem, we can rely on the bigger centers in Bloomington or Peoria and are just a computer away from accessing those services.”

Urology is one of more than 20 specialties available to the Pontiac area, including cardiology, ear-nose-throat, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, pain management, rheumatology and vascular surgery.

Science, culture meet and meld

Many urology procedures can be done on an outpatient basis, and Dr. Tolentino noted proudly that his field has often carried the beacon of medical technology, becoming among the first to use robotic surgery, minimally invasive procedures and video and microscopic techniques.

This appealed to the science-minded Tolentino when he was a young doctor-in-training, but his residency in New York City also unleashed another side to his personality. Bitten then by the theater bug, he dabbled in community theater choruses before launching a second career as a Broadway producer. His credits include “Rock of Ages” and “Christmas Story – the Musical.”

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Common instruments and techniques:

Cystoscope: Device used to examine the interior of the bladder and ureters, the tubes that carry urine from kidneys to bladder.

Resectoscope: Surgical instrument used to remove tissue from the uterus, prostate, bladder, or urethra.

Urethratome: Instrument attached with a small cutting device to eliminate a stricture (narrowing) of the urethra.

Ureteroscope (either flexible or rigid): Longer and thinner than a cystoscope, a ureteroscope is used to examine the ureters.

Lithotripsy: Technique to pulverize gallstones or kidney stones.
POTTY TALK

You urinate by relaxing your pelvic floor muscles as the bladder contracts, squeezing urine into your urethra. The muscles that kept the urethra shut relax, and the urine flows out. Those muscles can be weakened by vaginal childbirths, aging, menopause (that reduces estrogen production that helps keep the bladder and urethra healthy), weight gain or surgery. The bladder also can be over-stimulated by caffeine or alcohol, or irritated by carbonated drinks.

Incontinence in women:
Stress incontinence causes urine to leak when you laugh or cough.
Urge incontinence (overactive bladder) when muscle spasms signal an urgency to urinate.

Incontinence in men:
Usually due to an enlarged prostate or as a consequence of prostate surgery.

Your physician will first rule out medical causes such as infection, anatomy problems, or medication reaction.

Don’t hold it in!
You should be able to hold your urine for about three hours, no longer than four or less than two. You can develop a potty schedule and train yourself to control the urge. Keep widening the gap between bathroom trips – but not too much!

Drink up – wisely
Manage your fluids, but don’t skip the water because you’re afraid of a leak. You’ll become dehydrated, and your urine will become thicker and irritates the bladder.
Urinary incontinence is no laughing matter for the millions of women and men who experience it. While it’s a sensitive subject, it’s also treatable—often without surgery or even medication.

What to some is a drop in the bucket—a sporadic minor annoyance—can isolate others from social activities because they fear the floodgates will open. It affects women more often than men. But it’s not “a part of getting older,” or to be accepted “because Mom or Grandma did.”

‘There are a lot of different options’

“Incontinence happens frequently with aging, but I wouldn’t call it a normal process of aging,” said Dr. Rebecca Proehl, internal medicine and pediatric specialist at OSF Saint James-John W. Albrecht Medical Center. “It’s not something you want to ignore, because it can affect you in many ways and often keeps you from the lifestyle you enjoy.”

“It’s a misconception that you just buy panty-liners and deal with it,” said Dr. Lacey Moy, family medical specialist. “There are a lot of different options.”

Once medical causes are ruled out, doctors are more likely to schedule physical therapy than surgery. Exercises that strengthen the pelvic floor muscles effectively reduce or eliminate incontinence—or could improve surgery’s success if it’s needed. Medication to calm bladder spasms is also an option.

**Toning muscles stops leaks**

Don’t be embarrassed to talk to your doctor. If incontinence is distorting your lifestyle, that subject is as critical to you as your blood pressure levels, said Dr. Ashley Brennan.

As a doctor of physical therapy, Dr. Brennan knows muscles. She’s also one of a handful of certified therapists in the region trained to help men and women manage incontinence. Since she began offering incontinence therapy at OSF Saint James, she’s helped an average of one new patient a week.

Pelvic floor muscles—the sling that supports the bladder—get out of shape and don’t work the way they should. Brennan teaches a series of exercises to tone and tighten the muscles.

**Biofeedback and behavioral management**

Unlike rebuilding joint strength, “you can’t feel a lot of movement when you’re doing these,” said Dr. Brennan. Using biofeedback, patients trace their alternate tension and relaxation on a computer monitor which reads sensors. Besides strength training, Dr. Brennan and the patient explore behaviors, “about what you’re eating and drinking.”

“The sessions are not the big undertaking or time commitment some of my patients fear,” Dr. Lacey Moy said. She reassures them that sessions take place in a private room remodeled expressly for that purpose.

**A drier you in 12 weeks!**

The length of therapy varies by patient, but can extend up to three months over as many as six hour-long sessions, a less intense schedule than is required for most orthopedic therapy. Between visits, patients practice daily exercises.

Most patients see improvement, Dr. Brennan said. “We stop when they’re satisfied with where they are. If we’re not progressing, we move on to medication or surgery—but few of my patients have felt the need to do that.”

Dr. Brennan said the exercises also benefit young bed-wetters. “It’s the opposite of (women’s incontinence)—we’re teaching them how to relax yet control their bladder.”

“It’s nice to be able to refer people to Ashley and prevent the need for some surgeries,” said Dr. Proehl. “Women like that idea!”
Dietary tune-up can jump-start your GI health

Gloria Duy knows what it’s like when food becomes an enemy.

As OSF Saint James – John W. Albrecht Medical Center’s registered dietitian, she counsels about nutrition, but two decades ago, she was the one needing advice.

Undiagnosed celiac disease, or gluten intolerance, left her malnourished and sluggish, living in “a mental fog.” “I used to drive my kids to the park and sit in the car and watch them play,” she mused regretfully.

The diagnosis was a long time coming, and it changed more than her diet. In her 40s, she embarked on a new career as a registered dietician. Her own struggles to find a nutritional “fix” ignited in her a passion to help people with health issues eat healthfully and within a reasonable budget.

Shelve the packaged products and keep it simple

The only cure for celiac is diet. But initially, going wheat- and gluten-free limited Duy to fresh meats, fruits and vegetables. “You can’t eat the foods you used to”, she said. “Getting past that takes time. It was like going through a death.”

When off-the-shelf solutions fell short, she customized in her own kitchen. Though more gluten-free products are available now, they can be expensive and “some can be unhealthy — so you could be trading one problem for another, like diabetes.”

Don’t rely just on packaged goods and overlook naturally gluten-free foods such as rice, vegetables and fruits, she suggested. “Stick to simple foods which you can find in the outer aisles of your grocery,” Duy said. It’s sound advice for any diet.

Celiac disease:
Also known as gluten intolerance, is a genetic condition that affects 1 in 133 Americans. It damages the lining of the small intestine, preventing proper absorption of nutrients. Symptoms: abdominal pain, bloating, indigestion, constipation, diarrhea, nausea, depression, fatigue, joint pain.

Gluten:
A protein present in cereal grains, such as wheat, barley or rye, that is responsible for the elastic texture of dough

Naturally gluten-free products:
Fresh fruits, meats and eggs; plain beans, corn, rice and nuts.

Beware of “hidden” gluten:
that can be found in seasonings, dressings, gravies, b breadings, and processed meats, for instance. Some cereals (and beer and ale) contain malt. Check product labels.

OSF Saint James Celiac Support group:
Meets the second Tuesday of each month. For more information contact Gloria Duy at (815) 842-4536. Her website is glutenfreepoodlehome.com
Going “viral”

Two years ago, Duy began chronicling her dietary adventures in a blog that reaches 25,000 readers worldwide. “When I started it, I thought I’d reach the people in Pontiac, not in Russia or Latvia or places I never heard of!”

Her expertise is recognized throughout OSF Healthcare System, and patients as far away as Peoria or Bloomington are referred to her. A celiac support group launched last year at OSF Saint James has attracted a wide and growing audience.

“The only cure for celiac is diet.”

Diet can avert GI upsets

A balanced diet can treat or prevent many gastrointestinal disorders. “People don’t recognize how important diet is to health until they’ve been diagnosed with a serious disease that might have been prevented,” Duy said. Teach children healthy diet choices early.

For another great recipe and more information on tuning up your GI health, go to: osfsaintjames.org/recipes/
Gastrointestinal maladies and food intolerances are more prevalent today because we lead less active lives than our grandparents did, eat differently and consume different products. Gluten, for instance, “is a cheap filler that can be found even in a breath mint.”

Let your doctor or a specialist (gastroenterologist), rule out any serious illness before changing your diet. Likewise, if a special diet is prescribed, consult a nutrition expert to set you on the right path.

Changing habits one spoonful at a time

“There’s not one diet for every person. Most people expect me to plan their diet for them, but I let them tell me their diet, and we work to make adjustments based on health considerations and their likes and dislikes,” Duy said.

The change doesn’t have to be unsettling. “Make small changes. GI health is like that – you’re not going to change a horrible diet overnight. Pick one thing and move on, and a few days later pick another.”

Meanwhile, a healthy Duy is happily sharing new gluten-free recipes with her husband and her readers. Her husband does not have celiac disease, but “loves getting homemade meals three times a day!”

She believes there’s a reason celiac disease happened to her. “The hardest thing was realizing I missed out a lot in life by not feeling well — but I didn’t know how bad I felt until I felt well. Helping someone now makes up for what I went through, if I can prevent a bigger issue for them.”

HELPFUL WEBSITES

NUTRITION INFORMATION:
Government information on food and nutrition
nutrition.gov
Diet and calorie counting
calorieking.com
Tools, recipes and blogs
nutritiondata.self.com

FOOD INTOLERANCE:
National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse
digestive.niddk.nih.gov
Gluten Intolerance Group, a national support group
gluten.net
University of Illinois Celiac Disease Center
cureceliacdisease.org
Food intolerances open new lifestyles, friendships

“I stood in the grocery and I cried.”

Marissa Witsman despaired at ever eating well again after being diagnosed four years ago with celiac disease. Recalling that first visit to a grocery store, “I didn’t know what I could eat. There was wheat and gluten in everything!”

But by her wedding day that year, the young bride was managing her disease instead of letting it manage her. While her guests shared traditional wedding cake, she nibbled on a separate gluten-free one.

Boning up at Celiac U

Understanding what her condition was didn’t show her how to live with it, so she began researching. Through the Internet, she found a good source in the University of Chicago website, and to her surprise, one Google search turned up an expert in her own hometown. Dietician Gloria Duy gave her a crash course in “Celiac 101.”

“I don’t know how I would have gotten along without her in the beginning,” said the 28-year-old speech therapist. “The best thing I learned was to keep things simple. It’s so easy to get frustrated and want to make it complicated.”

Write your own book to manage symptoms

At one point, Patty Lloyd found that “anything I ate made me sick” and diarrhea or constipation was inevitable. “It got so I didn’t want to eat because I never enjoyed a meal.”

Once diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome, she got some answers and a lot more questions. “‘I’m diagnosed, now I’m done,’ I thought. But I wasn’t.” When medical science left her without a miracle potion, she set out to manage her symptoms with Duy’s help.

“She understood my frustration,” said Lloyd, a the 54-year-old Pontiac city employee. “Gloria told me there’s no book about how to manage my condition, so everybody has to write their own.”

Learning to speak celiac

Witsman bought specialty cookbooks and attended cooking demonstrations. To whip up a trouble-free honeymoon to Mexico, she carried the “Gluten-Free Bible,” which “had all sorts of notes to explain things in different languages.”

These days, “Cooking for Isaiah” is a constant culinary companion because “the food is so delicious and uncomplicated. There are recipes for donuts and other things I thought I could never have.”

Rising to the challenge

Her husband doesn’t share the disease but does share the meals. “I don’t make two different meals - but he does have his own loaf of bread.” The family eats healthier, she said, and plans ahead. “Now when we go away overnight or on vacation, we have to plan it out more. And I’ve educated our families for Thanksgiving and family dinners.”

She added: “It became a challenge to have the things I had before and have them taste good. I decided I shouldn’t have to suffer just because I have celiac disease.”
COLONOSESCOPHOBIA?
Stop putting it off. You’ll be glad you did

If the thought of having a colonoscopy makes you squirm, you’re not alone. But if you’ve had one, you’re not alone either — and the “haves” column is getting pretty crowded. Physicians are tickled pink about that.

“A colonoscopy is the one tried and true method to find polyps. The other processes available can’t treat abnormalities, but a colonoscopy can identify and treat,” said Dr. Travis Holt, OSF Medical Group colorectal surgeon. He and OSF Medical Group gastroenterologists Drs. Omar Khokhar and David Rzepczynski perform hundreds of the procedures each year.

‘If they’d known it was this easy …’

If not detected and removed, polyps (growths) that start out benign can become colorectal cancer — a leading killer.

“We expect by doing more colonoscopies we can catch polyps early, and so we’ll reduce the risk of colon cancer,” Holt said. Once the procedure is done, most people “look back and say they’d have had it done long ago if they’d known it was this easy.”

Holt said OSF HealthCare’s electronic medical records system can improve the colonoscopy score by alerting primary care providers to which patients haven’t had one, so they can bring up the issue during routine visits.

Dr. Calvin Moy, family medical specialist, encounters fear of the findings and fear of the procedure in equal measure. “We can’t do anything about treating them if we don’t look first. Luckily we live in an age where we can prevent this cancer from occurring if we catch it early.”

Knowing that a relative or spouse took the plunge first is a strong convincer, he added.

The power of diet

Recommendations for another once-popular screening — a prostate-specific antigen test to detect prostate cancer — have been revised, doctors say. A test is no longer automatic following elevated PSA levels, but is still recommended for high-risk patients. “A lot of things, not always cancer, can cause your PSA to be elevated,” said Dr. John M. Rinker, internal medicine specialist.

Endoscopic procedures also can trace causes of other gastrointestinal issues such as acid reflux, heartburn, and stomach and bowel problems. Some issues can be treated with medication, and a change in diet can also relieve many symptoms. “The power of diet and exercise cannot be underestimated,” Dr. Rinker said.

He cautions against mass consumption of probiotics or vitamins, which aren’t regulated and might interact with prescription medications.

As dreaded as the various “scopies” procedures might be, sometimes they’re necessary. “Sometimes we can’t do anything without seeing inside,” Dr. Moy says. “We can interpret what’s happening from your description and response to medication, but we might just need someone to go in and take a look.”

When should you have a colonoscopy?

Doctors recommend everybody — men and women — be screened at 50. If you have a family history of colon cancer, get your first screening 10 years earlier. The procedure should be repeated every three or five years if polyps were discovered or every 10 years if the findings were clear.
WHEN A SPECIALIST IS NEEDED, TRAVEL DOESN’T HAVE TO BE.
OSF Saint James is well-prepared to provide surgical care.

More Pontiac-area residents are relying on OSF Saint James - John W. Albrecht Medical Center’s surgical teams to screen for and treat urology and gastroenterology disorders.

Since the arrival of urology specialist Dr. Mariano Tolentino and gastroenterology specialists Dr. David Rzepczynski and Dr. Omar Khokhar, the ground-floor surgery rooms are busy with endoscopic procedures to examine the urinary or intestinal tracts and treat what is found there.

Successful outcomes depend on the physician’s skills and on the expert assistance of nurses and technicians before, during and after the procedure, which is performed in a setting that puts state-of-the-art equipment and instruments at their fingertips.

“Why not stay close to home rather than drive 45 minutes when you’re not feeling well?” suggested surgery director Yvette Pastirik. “We have the same equipment and technology to perform the same outpatient procedures offered in Bloomington, and patients don’t need to travel.”

The hospital recently replaced and updated four key instruments designed to examine, diagnose or treat urological disorders: a cystoscope, a resectoscope, an urethratome and two ureteroscopes. (See page 9 for descriptions of each instrument)

Two operating rooms are dedicated to gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures such as colonoscopies, and all the rooms are equipped with high-definition video capability.

Skilled nurses and technicians committed to quality care and patient safety assist in the operating room and guide patients through pre-op preparation and post-op recovery. “Everybody plays such an important role” in patient care, Pastirik said.

The staff continually trains in the latest procedures and practices. Most recently, registered nurse Nicole Murphy and surgical techs Megan White and Katie Thomas earned specialized certifications in urology and gastroenterology procedures, respectively.

“Patients are always complimenting us on how they’re cared for by people they know who care about them,” Pastirik said.
Dr. James “Ben” Mikeworth speaks his patients’ language. Like them, he knows how hard it is to lose weight or overcome bad habits while meeting career and family demands that can strip even the strongest resolve. So his medical advice comes from the gut.

“We doctors struggle with the same things patients do. I’ve gained weight, which I’m trying to lose. I also have a family history of heart disease and diabetes, and I’m actively trying to reduce my risks so I can live long enough to see my grandchildren graduate,” said the 32-year-old.

On the eve of taking a new job with the internal medicine/pediatrics practice at OSF Saint James-John W. Albrecht Medical Center, Dr. Mikeworth decided to shed pounds. He cut back on calories, aided by high-tech assistance. “There’s a (smartphone) app for that!” he says, which lets him monitor his calorie intake.

Steady determination resulted in a drop of 17 pounds in five weeks. A stubborn smoking habit is also succumbing to a barrage of stop-smoking aids.

Dr. Mikeworth joins the OSF family a year after his wife, Dr. Jessica White, M.D., joined OSF Medical Group — Minonk. The couple has a daughter, who is a toddler.

The son of two schoolteachers grew up south of Champaign in Villa Grove. He aspired to the medical school since grade school, but family health issues solidified his ambition.

A scuba diver who photographs his adventures, Dr. Mikeworth enjoys “seeing things you don’t see every day outside the Discovery Channel. He calls diving “a contained thrill” with just a tinge of danger.

In becoming part of OSF HealthCare, he hopes to empower his patients to manage their health just as he’s trying to do. To these healthy partnerships Dr. Mikeworth brings a genuineness and personal experience. He can honestly say he’s been there.
When you’re first prescribed a special diet, you wonder where to find foods or ingredients to get and stay healthy.

The answer can sometimes be just blocks away at your local supermarket.

Customers at Pontiac’s County Market, 406 W. Madison, began requesting gluten-free foods a few years back and store personnel paid attention, said manager Rodney Carstens, adding proudly that the store became one of the first in the chain to carry a wide variety.

“Meeting customer demand was difficult until manufacturers expanded their specialty lines, said grocery manager Ryne Holzhauer. Now, many a County Market shopper has been saved a 40-minute trip to metro specialty stores by being able to cross gluten-free cereals, salad dressings, flours, baking products, frozen foods, frozen waffles, pizzas, fish sticks, microwavable meals and breads off their shopping lists.

Gluten-free items are well-labeled and easy to spot. On some shelves, gluten-free products nearly outnumber standard products.

Department managers happily point customers toward gluten-free selections, said deli manager Casey Higgins, turning to her display case to do just that.

Only in the bakery have gluten-free options not been possible, because fresh-baked products could be easily contaminated by ingredients that contain gluten, said bakery manager Betsy Nolan.

To request the store to carry a specialty product, tell a store manager.

“If it’s out there, and you don’t see it and you want it, ask us,” Carstens said. “We’ll try every avenue we can to get it.”

Gluten-Free In Aisle 5

Neighborhood supermarket serves up specialty foods

Special-order gluten-free products are also only a click away at mycountymarket.com. Click on Unique Food Finder and browse through the “gluten-free” category.
For a directory of our OSF Medical Group providers, complete with their education and qualifications, contact Christina at 815-842-4950 or visit us online at osfsaintjames.org/physicians.
Don’t Make Me Laugh...

Incontinence issues? We can help.

At OSF Saint James - John W. Albrecht Medical Center, we have specially trained physical therapists who can help determine the cause of incontinence. They will work with you to create a treatment plan. Some treatment plans may include:

- Biofeedback: a process that allows an individual to monitor the ability to contract or relax a muscle
- Bladder training
- Exercises for the pelvic floor muscles that support the bladder
- Trigger point and myofascial release techniques
- Diet modifications
- Lifestyle changes
- Physiological quieting techniques
- Bladder diary to increase awareness of patterns and habits

Ask your physician if OSF Rehabilitation Services is right for you.

OSF Rehabilitation Services
OSF Saint James - John W. Albrecht Medical Center
2500 W. Reynolds Street
Pontiac, IL 61764
(815) 842-4584

Services are also available in Bloomington/Normal.
For more information, please call (815) 842-4584 or go to osfsaintjames.org.

Mariano Tolentino, Jr., MD

OSF Medical Group Urology is in Pontiac!

Dr. Mariano Tolentino, Jr., of OSF Medical Medical Group - Urology Woodbine in Bloomington is at OSF Saint James – John W. Albrecht Medical Center every Wednesday for both patient consultations and to perform a variety of procedures.

Dr. Tolentino has been practicing medicine in Central Illinois since 1995. In addition to urology, Dr. Tolentino’s area of special interest is male infertility.

Call 309-661-9999 for more information or to schedule an appointment at either location.

OSF Medical Group - Urology
2500 West Reynolds St., Pontiac
osfmedicalgroup.org