Emory Continence Center offers women new options in therapy, surgery

Emory Urology has pioneered minimally invasive treatments, advances in imaging, and new surgical techniques that have brought relief to thousands of women suffering from bladder control problems.

Niall Galloway, director of the Emory Urology Continence Center, says Emory has played a leading role in advancing treatments for urinary incontinence in women and educating urologists about new procedures.

One in four American women ages 30 to 59 is troubled by urinary incontinence. Although 22% of men over age 65 have bladder control problems as well, the phenomenon is twice as common in women, according to the National Institutes of Health.

New magnetic resonance imaging technology has improved physicians’ ability to recognize the full extent of pelvic prolapse problems and has changed the approach to pelvic floor reconstruction, Galloway says.

“We must encourage surgeons to recognize and repair the precise patterns of pelvic support defects. This will restore normal pelvic floor anatomy for the best long-lasting outcomes,” Galloway says.

In addition to pioneering surgical advances, Emory Urology has been one of the first to emphasize nonsurgical treatments in continence care.

An example of the novel treatments used at Emory is a high-tech therapy chair invented by Galloway and Emory neurologist Charles Epstein. The chair uses a technology called extracorporeal magnetic inner stimulation used at Emory is a high-tech therapy chair equipped with a magnetic field generator that delivers magnetic pulses. Treatments are painless, take about twenty minutes, and the muscle contraction is completely involuntary; no effort is required from the patient. A complete course of treatment takes up to six or eight weeks, depending on the condition of the pelvic floor muscles.

The therapy, which improves blood flow to the treated area, also relieves pain, speeds bladder recovery in men after prostate surgery, and strengthens the pelvic floor muscles of patients before urologic surgery.

About 80% of patients report improvements of at least 50%, Galloway says.

“This is a nice example of what patients should expect medicine to be doing in the 21st century,” he says. “Just as a cardiac defibrillator can be used to shock the heart back into a normal rhythm, we are using pulsed magnetic energy for clinical benefit. It is a dignified treatment for an undignified problem.”

Called NeoControl, the technology is licensed to Atlanta-based Neotonus and received FDA approval in 1998. The devices are used in more than 225 treatment centers in the United States and more than 53 countries throughout the world.

Another minimally invasive treatment developed at Emory Urology has been proven in clinical trials to be safe and effective for reducing severe stress incontinence in women.

Adjustable Continence Therapy (ACT) is an outpatient procedure in which tiny adjustable balloons are implanted on each side of a patient’s urethra to restore normal functioning.

Patients, on average, reported significant continence improvement one year after undergoing treatment.

With ACT, there are no abdominal or vaginal incisions. The balloons can be adjusted post-operatively as needed, and the treatment is reversible, Galloway says. A similar device called ProACT is being evaluated for men with stress urinary incontinence after prostate surgery.

“The ACT device spells hope for millions of women dealing with incontinence, particularly those with severe weakness of the urethral muscles,” says Galloway. “The results we have thus far are very promising.”

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. In men, 50% of the deaths occur in those without a history of heart disease.

More than 10 million men in the United States have ED.

Risk factors for cardiovascular disease that can contribute to ED include diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol, smoking, and high blood pressure.
Fighting Prostate Cancer Together
We need your help.

Plant research seeds
Your gift of seed money will enable Emory Urology to establish new pilot research projects, such as the search for unique prostate cancer markers—and ultimately new therapies—through technologies such as nanotechnology, imaging, and molecular targeting.

Multiply your gift
Your gift will allow Emory Urology to dedicate scientists and computer systems to analyzing data that may lead to important discoveries about who is at risk for prostate cancer, allowing us to start preventative therapies before this deadly disease has the chance to strike.

Endow a chair
Your gift to endow a professorship will strengthen Emory Urology’s ability to attract and retain the world’s best physician-researchers, adding to our renowned faculty and increasing our ability to make advances in detection, treatment, and prevention of prostate cancer.

At Emory Urology, we are on the threshold of great discoveries, but we can’t make these breakthroughs without your support. Please consider a gift to Emory Urology today so we can continue the fight to cure prostate cancer.

Send your gift to Emory Urology, 1365-B Clifton Road, Room 1400, Atlanta, GA 30322. For more information contact Kristin Boggs at 404.778.5429 or email kboggs@emory.edu.

2007 Prostate Cancer Dinner

The 3rd Annual Prostate Cancer Dinner was held on September 19, 2007, at the home of Ed and Elly Dobbs.

The dinner was attended by more than 150 supporters of Emory Urology, scientists, patients, and family members.

The presentation featured a summary of the research conducted at Emory Urology.

Emory Urology advisory board member Chuck Warren, left, and Marshall honored Leland Chung at the dinner for his contributions to Emory University and urologic research. Chung is director of the Molecular Urology and Therapeutics Program at Emory.

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One man’s personal battle against prostate cancer
Chuck Warren, a member of Emory Urology’s advisory board, began his personal battle against prostate cancer in December 2003.

Now, Warren is cancer free and is committed to helping others in their battles with prostate cancer, as well as helping win the war against this deadly disease.

Recently, the medical information website WebMD featured Warren’s first-person account of his family history, diagnosis, and fight against prostate cancer.

You can read about Warren’s experiences at webmd.com/prostate-cancer/features/winning-prostate-cancer-battle.

WebMD also hosts Warren’s Web journal of life as a cancer survivor. You can follow his progress at blog.swebmd.com/prostate-cancer.

Emory Urology News is a publication of the Department of Urology of Emory University School of Medicine. If you have a comment or would like to add your name to the distribution list for this publication, contact Kristin Boggs at 404.778.5429 or kboggs@emory.edu.