

## Early Detection:

# Trial Tests Virtual Colonoscopy Vs. Standard; Polyp Study Favors Colonoscopy Over Barium

Duke University Medical Center plans to begin a clinical trial comparing two standard methods of detection colon polyps with the newest method, the virtual colonoscopy.

The trial will enroll 3,800 patients over four years at hospitals at Duke and the University of California, San Francisco. Patients at Veterans Affairs Medical Centers in Durham and San Francisco also will be eligible.

The trial will compare air contrast barium enema, standard colonoscopy, and virtual colonoscopy, which uses spiral CT scanners to produce images of the colon.

“By the conclusion of this trial, we should be able to definitively answer the question of which method is the best at detecting polyps and other lesions in the colon,” said Don Rockey, of Duke, who is leading the study. “We expect that the results of the trial—the largest such trial funded by NIH—will form the scientific basis for setting national policy standards of imaging techniques in detection colon cancer.”

The study also will examine how each of the tests is viewed and tolerated by patients, as well as their cost-

effectiveness.

To be admitted into the study, patients must have evidence of blood in their stools. There are no age limitations to participate. Over a week to 10-day period, participants will undergo all three tests.

For further information about participating in the trial, contact Yvonne Ford, phone 919-668-0731.

### Results From National Polyp Study

Earlier this summer, research findings from the National Polyp Study, a 10-year trial, found that colonoscopy was more effective than barium enema in detecting the type of colon polyps (adenomas) that can develop into cancer. The results were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on June 15.

In the comparison of colonoscopy to double contrast barium enema in the follow-up of patients after the removal of polyps, colonoscopy detected pre-cancerous polyps at a rate of more than two to one. The barium

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## RTOG Finds Twice A Day Radiation For Advanced Head And Neck Cancer Improved Local Tumor Control Rate

Treating patients with locally advanced head and neck cancer twice a day with radiation therapy for at least part of their overall treatment should now be the standard of care, a study by the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group indicates.

The nationwide study included 1,073 patients who had cancer confined to the head and neck area. It found that treating a patient over a shorter period of time (six weeks) with part of that treatment being once a day and the other part being twice a day, five days a week, to a total ra-

diation dose of 72 Gy was better than standard treatment, said Karen Fu, chairman of the RTOG study. The local tumor control rate at two years for these patients was 54.5 percent compared to 46 percent for standard treatment.

Treating a patient once a day, five days a week for a total dose of 70 Gy  
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