

BE THE PICTURE OF HEALTH IN CHERRY CREEK

Dr. James Ehrlich is out to make Cherry Creek a mecca for the prevention and early detection of life-threatening diseases. As Medical Director and founder of Colorado Heart and Body Imaging (CHBI), Ehrlich wants physicians and their patients to utilize the resources of “world’s most versatile and technologically advanced screening center” nestled among the bistros and boutiques of Cherry Creek North.

A proponent of early detection, the charismatic physician, lecturer and educator describes America’s current health care system as skewed toward treating disease, rather than preventing it. “Most people start seeing their doctors when they have symptoms; by that time, it’s often too late to effectively treat the problem,” notes Ehrlich. “Here’s an example—40 percent of women who have heart disease die of it without their symptoms ever having been detected. What we provide is the opposite of what most people expect from health care—we try to find disease in its very earliest stages.”

Ehrlich introduced coronary imaging using Electron Beam Tomography (EBT) to Colorado in 1997. EBT is an ultra-fast scanner that is able to capture clear pictures of a moving heart without needles or dyes. Since then, he has continued to improve and expand the scope of the centers (there is an additional clinic in the Diamond Hill neighborhood), becoming a leader in preventive imaging technology. Ehrlich has amassed a corps of physicians who are experts in specific diagnostic fields and has launched extensive educational programs for

physicians to familiarize them with CHBI offerings.

The EBT Heart scan has proven to be a powerful predictor of potential coronary problems at an early stage when preventive strategies can still be implemented. It may also detect the potential for stroke and reveal the presence of calcium build-up or obstructions in the heart or arteries. EBT heart scans may also reveal potential sources of trouble in the surrounding organs, including the liver or pancreas. The

heart scan is recommended for middle-aged adults who have at least one risk factor for heart disease, including family history, high cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension or obesity.

Motivated by his belief that diagnostic screening and testing should not use up the better part of a day, Ehrlich offers testing modes that require minimal time, little or no radiation, and non-invasive techniques. Colorado Heart and Body Imaging has filled its 3,000 square feet of space on

Columbine with the most advanced equipment from all over the world. In one location, patients can now undergo procedures including heart scans, virtual colonoscopy, vascular scans, a full complement of stress testing and ultrasounds. Ehrlich reports that there has been increased interest in lung scans following the death of ABC anchor Peter Jennings from lung cancer earlier this summer.

The Center has recently acquired a Sentinel breast scanner, which has been approved by the FDA to aid in the early detection of breast cancer and does so without radiation or discomfort. The Sentinel ana-

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lyzes blood flow as well as temperature changes in the breast tissue may indicate the early stages of breast cancer. The test takes about four minutes and results are available to the patient's physician immediately.

Colorado Heart and Body Imaging also offers a sleep apnea test that can be performed at home, a melanoma scan, executive physicals, a Bone Densitometry scan that is more sensitive than the more common DXA (dual x-ray absorptiometry) test as well as a full body scan. A "Teen Screen" program is in the planning stages. It will target both young couch potatoes and athletes who may have a very rare thickening of the heart membrane that may contraindicate strenuous physical activity. The Executive Woman package includes a test for bone density, the Sentinel Breast scan, and a heart and carotid scan, all of which can be performed in about an hour's time.

Ehrlich emphasizes that Colorado Heart and Body Imaging is a detection facility, not a treatment center. After careful analysis of test results, the doctors at CHBI will suggest that a patient discuss treatment options with his general practitioner or a specialist. However, in many cases, patients are relieved to discover that they are not currently at risk and that no further treatment is necessary.

Diagnostic procedures may or may not be covered by patient insurance, depending on physician recommendation and/or the individual's coverage. However, the prices of many of the tests are not out-of-reach for those who are interested in early diagnosis. For example, the heart scan is \$395; the bone density, \$225. ■

COLORADO HEART AND BODY IMAGING HAS TWO LOCATIONS 201 COLUMBINE STREET, SUITE 250 AND 2490 WEST 26TH AVENUE, SUITE 110A. THE COLUMBINE STREET LOCATION CAN BE REACHED AT (303) 785-0464. TO REACH THE LOCATION ON WEST 26TH AVENUE CALL (303) 433-8800. FOR INFORMATION ON EITHER LOCATIONS VISIT WWW.COLORADOHEART.COM

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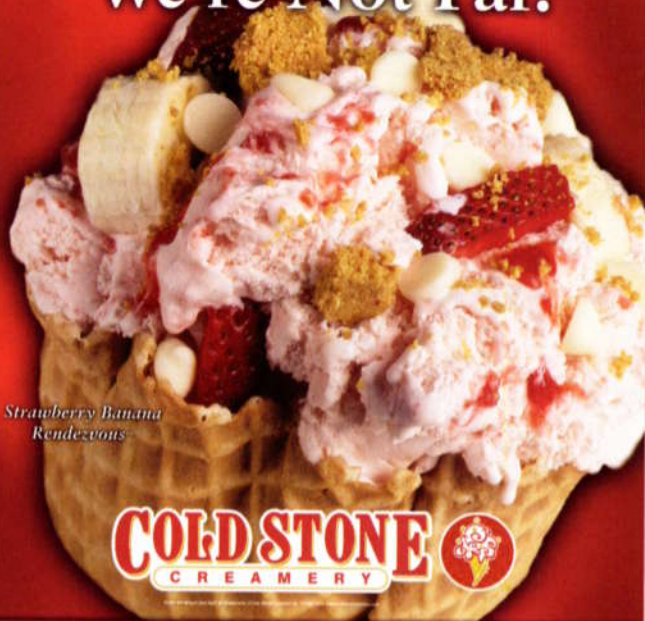
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