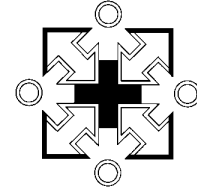


Carteret General Hospital
3500 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

Press Release

October 14, 2008
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For Immediate Release:

Carteret General Hospital invites you to join with us in promoting awareness of abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAA) and a screening benefit for the early detection of this disease on October 18. Diagnosis of an AAA can be done painlessly with a simple ultrasound scan.

Aneurysms are abnormal enlargements of arteries in the body. Leakage or rupture of an aneurysm in the aorta, the largest artery in the body, is often fatal. It is now possible to treat aortic aneurysms through a minimally invasive approach, with patients only spending a few days in the hospital, rather than the typical one to two weeks following conventional “open” repair. This minimally invasive approach is now available at Carteret General Hospital and is now being performed by Dr. Robert Brockman of Carteret Surgical Associates.

Abdominal aortic aneurysms are usually without symptoms, unless they leak or rupture, which is then a surgical emergency. The most common symptoms of rupture include sudden onset of excruciating back, abdominal or flank pain, often with other signs of blood loss such as dizziness and drop in blood pressure. Asymptomatic aneurysms can often be diagnosed by physical examination and usually present as a pulsatile mass in the abdomen. A large number of aortic aneurysms, however, are noted incidentally on x-rays, ultrasound examinations or CAT scans ordered for other reasons.

Aneurysms of the abdominal aorta make up greater than 90% of aneurysms found in the human body. The most common cause of these aneurysms is atherosclerosis, or “hardening of the arteries”. They are common in men, but also occur in women. Risk factors include hypertension, smoking, elevated cholesterol, and a family history of

aneurysm. The risk of rupture increases as the size of the aneurysm increases. Smaller aneurysms, with a lower risk of rupture, can be monitored semi-annually or annually with non-invasive studies, such as ultrasound or CAT scan. Larger aneurysms should be considered for elective repair, depending on the size of the aneurysm, and the age and general health of the patient.

“Endovascular” surgical techniques refer to the minimally-invasive repair of aneurysm, as well as repair of narrow or blocked arteries in the arterial circulation. Through small incisions in the groins, wires and small catheters are inserted into the arteries using special x-ray equipment for visualization. These wires and catheters are then used as guides to place the stents or stent-grafts used to repair the aneurysm. This minimally invasive approach can be performed in less time and with less pain than “open” techniques. Minimally invasive repair has fewer complications and much shorter hospitalizations, with patients often returning home in one or two days.

Narrow or blocked arteries of the vessels “downstream” from the aorta can often produce symptoms of leg pain brought on with walking or exercise. These narrow or blocked arteries can also be treated with minimally invasive surgery using balloon angioplasty and the above stents.

Dr. Robert Brockman is a partner with Carteret Surgical Associates and has been in practice in Carteret County for many years. He is Board Certified by the American Board of Surgery and Fellowship trained in peripheral vascular disease. He has extensive post-graduate training in minimally invasive vascular surgical techniques and regularly attends national teaching conferences in vascular disease treatment options, including endovascular procedures.

The availability of these advanced minimally invasive vascular techniques here in our county means that patients no longer need to travel to distant hospitals, but rather can receive their care here at home. Carteret General Hospital has state-of-the-art imaging equipment including CAT scanners and operating rooms equipped with the most

modern C-arm X-ray machines for the performance of these procedures. And, just as importantly, Carteret General Hospital offers highly trained anesthesiologists and anesthesiologists, nurses and radiology technicians.

Carteret General Hospital along with Dr. Robert Brockman is offering a free AAA screening on October 18. Call 808-6200 to schedule an appointment for a painless, non-invasive ultrasound screening in the Radiology Department. For more information on the New Approaches for the Treatment of Vascular Disease, plan to attend an educational opportunity on either September 23 or October 9 at 6 pm in the Hospital Cafeteria. These free discussions on vascular disease and AAAs will be presented by Dr. Brockman. Call 808-6200 to reserve a seat.