

For Immediate Release

**National Women's Health Week, Local Ob/Gyns
Stress Importance Of Regular Exams, Screenings**

Annual checkup still needed despite new cervical cancer screening guidelines

Cartersville, GA; May 1, 2012 – Among the most important initiatives that National Women's Health Week, May 13-20, promotes for improving health and reducing the risk of certain diseases are getting regular check-ups and preventative screenings, including those for cervical cancer. While annual Pap smears for screening the latter are now no longer generally recommended, adult females should still have a yearly exam, said Drs. Hugo Ribot and Malcolm Barfield of Cartersville Ob/Gyn Associates.

“The guidelines for cervical cancer screening have recently changed,” said Ribot. “They now recommend far less frequent screening – with none for women younger than 21 or older than 65 years of age and Pap smear testing every three years for those 21-29 years of age.” He continued, “Women who are 30-65 years of age should also have a Pap smear every three years – or a Pap and HPV test every five years.”

Ribot explained that the Pap smear is the primary test used for cervical cancer screening. “It detects abnormal or changing cells on the cervix that may develop into cancer,” he said, “while the HPV test detects high-risk types of the human papillomavirus (HPV) that can cause these cell changes.” He added, “The new guidelines only address the general population – and not special, high-risk populations who may need more intensive or alternative screening.”

Barfield emphasized that the lessened guidelines do not mean women should skip their annual physical. “The yearly well-woman exam has always included far more than a Pap smear,” he said, “and addresses many other important components of health care, screening and evaluation based on the patient's age and medical history. For example,” he continued, “the annual check-up for peri-menopausal women typically includes counseling on menopausal transition, hormone replacement therapy and osteoporosis prevention; testing for diabetes and thyroid disorders; evaluation of continence (bladder control); and appropriate referrals for mammography, bone density and colorectal cancer screening. All are important to staying physically and mentally healthy.”

Ribot added, “Annual exams also provide women the opportunity to discuss problems they may be experiencing, such as heavy or painful periods, PMS, fatigue, incontinence and other gynecologic-related issues that impact well being. Fortunately, there are readily available solutions to all of these conditions.”

Founded in 1984, Cartersville Ob/Gyn Associates provides comprehensive obstetrical, gynecological and well-woman care services. It is the only ob/gyn practice in Georgia with an onsite, fully accredited outpatient surgery center for performing all major and minor gynecological procedures. For more information, visit: www.cartersvilleobgyn.com.

National Women's Health Week is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information on the annual observance, visit: www.womenshealth.gov/whw.

For more information on the revised guidelines for cervical cancer screening, visit: www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/uspstfscerv.htm or [www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.3322/\(ISSN\)1542-4863](http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.3322/(ISSN)1542-4863).

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