

# HOMETOWN CONVENIENCE:

## FRH offers colonoscopy services

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**A**dding a level of hometown comfort has been the deciding factor for one local official when it comes to health care services that are usually offered in big cities.

Having previously traveled to San Antonio for medical procedures and visits, Frio County Commissioner Ruben Maldonado recently elected to have a colonoscopy at Pearsall's Frio Regional Hospital.

"I've been going to San Antonio for many years but found it more convenient staying home and having the procedures done at Frio Regional Hospital," Maldonado said. "It was very comfortable, I felt at ease because everyone there was very professional."

"It was a comfort to me knowing the people that work there. The experience was more personal, in San Antonio, once the procedure was done they just said, 'Have a nice day' and walked me out the door."

"Here, they gave me a snack after the procedure and made sure I was comfortable, it was a really good experience, I will definitely use Frio Regional Hospital again," he said.

Frio Regional Hospital recently began offering colonoscopy services

in its newly-equipped facility through its partnership with Methodist Healthcare, the largest health care provider in South Texas.

"Now you can get screened for colon cancer, where you live," FRH CEO Andy Williams said. "Early stages of colorectal cancer usually present no symptoms, that's why it's important that you receive a colonoscopy once you turn 50 years of age."

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer among men and women in the US. Screening is crucial for early detection of polyps or tumors. If found early, colorectal cancer is highly treatable.

People at increased risk, or with a family history, of colorectal cancer may start receiving scheduled colonoscopies earlier, depending on doctor's instructions.

Colonoscopies are exams used to detect changes or abnormalities in the large intestine (colon) and rectum and help doctors explore possible causes of abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, chronic constipation, chronic diarrhea and other intestinal problems.

During a colonoscopy, a long, flexible tube (colonoscope) is inserted into the rectum. A tiny video camera at the tip of the tube allows the doctor to view the inside of the entire colon.

If necessary, polyps or other types of abnormal tissue can be removed through the scope during a colonoscopy. Tissue samples (biopsies) can be taken during a colonoscopy as well.

Prior to the procedure, doctors may ask patients to clean out (empty) their colon. Any residue in the colon may obscure the view of the colon and rectum during the exam.

This may include following a special diet the day before the exam. Typically, patients aren't allowed to eat solid food the day before the exam. Drinks may be limited to clear liquids — plain water, tea and coffee without milk or cream, broth, and carbonated beverages. Avoid red liquids, which can be confused with blood during the colonoscopy. Patients may not be able to eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the exam.

Doctors will also usually recommend taking a laxative, in either pill form or liquid form usually the night before the colonoscopy, or both the night before and the morning of the procedure.

In some cases, an over-the-counter enema kit is required, either the night before the exam or a few hours before the exam — to empty the colon. This is generally only effective in emptying the lower colon and is usually not recommended as a primary way of emptying the colon.

Doctors should be aware of any medications the patient may be on at least a week before the exam — especially for those with diabetes, high blood pressure or heart problems or any medications or supplements that contain iron.

Doctors should also be made aware if the patient is taking aspirin or other medications that thin the blood, such as warfarin (Coumadin, Jantoven); newer anticoagulants, such as dabigatran (Pradaxa) or rivaroxaban (Xarelto), used to reduce risk of blood clots or stroke; or heart medications that affect platelets, such as clopidogrel (Plavix).

Dosages may need to be adjusted or stopped temporarily prior to the procedure.



### Hometown Healthcare, LLC

"Certified Rural Health Clinics"



#### Pearsall Clinic

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#### CLINIC HOURS

Mon-Fri - 8:15 a.m.-noon  
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Saturday - 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.  
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