

AHN Launches Program to Help Cancer Patients Pay for Fertility-preservation Treatment

Cancer treatment saves lives but can cause permanent infertility. For young people diagnosed with cancer who have yet to start a family, the impact can be devastating. AHN is helping cancer patients who are struggling with potential loss of their fertility, establishing a Fertility Preservation Fund that will cover the cost of emergency fertility preservation treatment for qualifying patients.

"The good news is that many options are available for cancer patients who want to preserve their fertility," said **Bryan Hecht, MD**, Medical Director of Allegheny Health Network's Jones Institute for Reproductive Medicine, located at West Penn Hospital. "By covering the cost of fertility-preservation procedures, we hope patients can choose the path that is best for them, without the burden of financial considerations."

Some, but not all, cancer treatments can cause temporary or permanent infertility. Chemotherapy and radiation treatments can damage a woman's eggs. Hormone therapies used to treat breast cancer may also affect a woman's ability to have a child.

To preserve fertility prior to cancer treatment, a woman's options include medical therapy to minimize cancer therapy impact on eggs, freezing eggs or fertilized embryos, which can be safely stored until her cancer treatment is completed. The eggs or embryos can then be thawed and implanted when she is ready to have children. However, the treatment is expensive and many patients have no way to pay for this emergency therapy.

The Fertility Preservation Fund is available to any cancer patient being treated within the Allegheny Health Network. Some income limitations apply.

If you have been diagnosed with cancer and want to determine if fertility preservation is appropriate, call the AHN Jones Institute for Reproductive Medicine at **412.578.5588** to schedule an appointment.

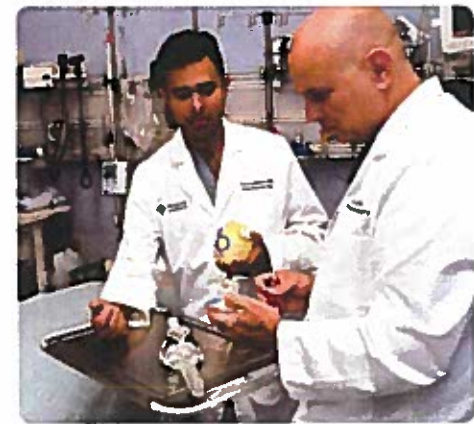
Reducing pain with a pump

Joint replacement surgery patients at Allegheny Health Network's Canonsburg Hospital are receiving a new pain management treatment that can provide more relief and can reduce the effects of powerful narcotics.

Medical personnel are now using the ON-Q pump, a non-narcotic, portable pain relief system.

The pump uses a catheter placed next to nerves that carry pain sensation to continuously infuse them with local anesthetic, while preserving the patient's muscle function, allowing them to walk and move with little or no pain.

Directed local anesthesia attacks pain directly at its source, providing more relief while reducing side effects of narcotics, including nausea, vomiting, constipation, and grogginess. "Traditionally, the way of relieving pain after surgery has been with narcotics such as a morphine injection or pain pills," said **Sutanu Misra, MD**, Chief of Anesthesiology at Canonsburg Hospital. "These drugs affect your entire body instead of targeting the source of the pain, may cause unpleasant side effects, and can keep you from recovering as quickly as possible."



Dr. Sutanu Misra, left and Dr. Donald Ravasio, right, examine the ON-Q pump at AHN's Canonsburg Hospital.

Improved pain management means patients feel better, become mobile sooner and can leave the hospital and resume daily activities more quickly. The patient can take the pump home for a few days if needed.

"It used to be unthinkable that a patient could have joint replacement surgery as an outpatient procedure, but with new surgical and pain relief methods, it's now possible and gaining popularity," said Canonsburg orthopaedic surgeon **Donald Ravasio, MD**.

For more information on joint replacement surgery at Canonsburg Hospital call **412.DOCTORS**.



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