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Press Release

New non-invasive PAP test for breast may identify breast disease up to eight years earlier – now available at Suncoast Women's Care.

Trinity, FL, May 20th 2008: Suncoast Women's Care is one of the first in this area to offer the new HALO™ Pap Test for the Breast. Women consistently rank breast cancer as a top healthcare concern due in part to the fact that so many breast cancers are found after the disease has been growing for years. Designed to detect abnormal cells in the breast, a new Pap Test for the breast may identify precancerous breast disease up to eight years earlier than a lesion might be found on a mammogram.

Breast cancers typically originate in the ductal system of the breasts. According to a recent New England Journal of Medicine article, benign breast disease – which begins as abnormal cells – is an important risk factor for breast cancer. This joins other studies that demonstrate that the cytological assessment of breast fluid, or Nipple Aspirate Fluid, can identify a woman's specific risk of breast cancer. For example, a woman with atypical cytology has a 4-5X greater risk of developing breast cancer than women who do not produce fluid; this risk is even greater when combined with family history.

NAF cytology has been used for years to identify high risk women in the research setting. But before the HALO System was developed, there was no practical way to test the general population. The HALO system is the first, automatic, noninvasive tool to collect ductal fluid in minutes and can easily be incorporated into a well woman visit.

Dr. Wanda Torres recommends that all women 25 and 55 have the HALO Breast Pap Test to evaluate their risk. Whether the test is administered annually will be determined by the patient's history. Since the introduction of the cervical pap smear in the 1950s, the death rate from cervical cancer has declined over 70%. However, the mortality rates for breast cancer have declined only modestly during the same time period. Currently, some 3,700 women die of cervical cancer while more than 40,000 die of breast cancer annually.

Using gentle suction like a breast pump, the HALO™ Breast Pap Test uses adjustable breast cups to collect NAF. During the 5-minute cycle, the HALO system generates mild compression on both breasts while simultaneously applying heat to retrieve any fluid from the ducts.

The HALO test does not replace the mammogram or self exam, but rather provides more information to identify high risk women. Even today, some 70% of breast cancer cases are in women not considered high risk. About half of all women won't secrete fluid, which puts them in the lowest risk category. For those that do and have abnormal cytology, the most important thing Dr. Wanda Torres will do is monitor the patient with increased surveillance, but she will also counsel them on lifestyle changes, and in some cases, refer them to a breast specialist, who may recommend improved imaging options such as an MRI, ultrasound, or diagnostic mammogram, or discuss minor surgical or pharmaceutical options as appropriate.

For more information, call Dr. Torres' office at (727) 376-0060 or visit www.suncoastwomenscare.com.