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Contact: Amy George, (972) 560-3236
Cooper Aerobics Center
E-mail: algeorge@cooperaerobics.com

Liz Dowling, (800) 386-0157
Dowling & Dennis Public Relations
E-mail: Liz@DowlingDennis.net

Cooper Clinic Offers New Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Test

Test identifies women at high risk, who may benefit
from Cooper Clinic's renowned prevention program

PHOENIX – Cooper Clinic, which is in its 38th year as a pioneer in preventive medicine, is now offering a revolutionary new test for breast cancer risk called HALO.

The screening is a non-invasive test that looks for abnormal cells in the breast ductal fluid of asymptomatic women.

The HALO Breast Pap Test identifies women who are at high risk for developing breast cancer -- and therefore can benefit from lifestyle changes, increased monitoring, or medical interventions. These steps are aimed at preventing the disease and helping to detect it at its earliest, most treatable stage.

HALO is the latest breast health test offered at Cooper Clinic's Craig Ranch location in McKinney, Texas.

“At Cooper Clinic, our approach to breast health is consistent with our overall philosophy of disease prevention, which is that it's easier to maintain good health than to regain it once it's lost,” said Cooper Clinic Founder and Chairman Dr. Kenneth Cooper, who started the movement for aerobic fitness. “This new test furthers our mission.”

HALO helps to solve a major dilemma in breast healthcare. Traditional methods for assessing breast cancer risk such as review of family history are not particularly effective. Eighty-nine percent of breast cancer patients do not have a family history of the disease. Moreover, of the nearly 180,000 women who will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, 70 percent will have no identifiable risk factor other than age.

“We now have the knowledge and methods to prevent breast cancer in large numbers of cases,” said Gail Lebovic, M.D., director of Women’s Services at Cooper Clinic. “But first we need to identify patients who are at elevated risk and get them on an appropriate preventive track. HALO is making a real contribution in this regard.”

Dr. Lebovic, a nationally prominent oncoplastic breast surgeon, is responsible for bringing HALO to Cooper Clinic.

The HALO Breast Pap Test is a new method for collecting nipple aspirate fluid (NAF). NAF is secreted from the milk ducts where 95 percent of invasive breast cancers begin.

The presence of abnormal cells, or atypia, in NAF is proven to increase a woman's chance of developing breast cancer by four- to five-fold.

Finding atypia years before it might become cancer enables a woman and her doctor to develop the appropriate "care path" for optimal management of her breast health. As an example of the value of NAF evaluation, a cancerous lump has typically been growing about eight years by the time it is seen on a mammogram.

NAF is collected by the HALO system using warmth, massage and suction, much like a breast pump. The process, which takes only five minutes, is inexpensive, noninvasive and easily accomplished in an annual check-up.

NAF testing is also useful for younger women. Mammography is often not as effective for premenopausal women under 40 or 50.

Prominent organizations such as National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society have recognized the use of atypia as a measure of breast cancer risk.

NAF evaluation is not a substitute for screening mammograms or cancer detection tools such as ultrasound or MRI. Regardless of their risk assessment status, women should also undergo routine breast exams and mammograms as recommended by their doctors.

HALO is made by NeoMatrix, an Irvine, Calif., company that develops innovative devices that allow women and their doctors to promote optimal breast health.

About Cooper Clinic

Cooper Clinic offers specialized breast health services at its McKinney, Texas location including screening, diagnostic and treatment services including digital mammography, MRI scanning, breast and pelvis ultrasound, DEXA bone density testing and minimally invasive biopsies, plus aesthetic and reconstructive surgery.

Founded by Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D., M.P.H. in 1970, Cooper Clinic is one of 10 health and wellness companies located at Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas. Cooper Clinic is a worldwide leader in preventive medicine and comprehensive physical examinations. For nearly 40 years, its expert physicians and staff have helped more than 100,000 patients live healthier lives. For more information, visit www.cooper-clinic.com.

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