



Dr. John Sonfield (left) and Dr. Amy Murrell (right), surgeons with Pee Dee Surgical Group, assisted by Susan Marshall, CST, perform a colon resection surgery.

**Colon disease can occur for several different reasons, one of the most common being colon cancer. In the year 2006, there will be more than 100,000 new cases of colon cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.**

For Don Goldman of Olanta, and his brother Greg Goldman of Lynchburg, colon disease didn't come as much of a surprise, since family history was not on their side.

"Our mother was diagnosed with colon cancer at the age of 42," said Don. "Our grandfather and three of his siblings had colon cancer, and our great grandmother and four of her siblings had colon cancer."

Don, 37, had been experiencing symptoms for approximately one year; however, he did not think any of them were an indication of colon cancer. His hemoglobin was low (anemia), and he had some fatigue and shortness of breath.

After some bleeding episodes, Don ended up in the McLeod Emergency Department, where Dr. Deepak Chowdhary of Pee Dee Gastroenterology performed some tests, including a colonoscopy. Dr. Chowdhary found a cancerous growth in Don's colon and recommended he have a colon resection, which would be performed by Dr. John Sonfield of Pee Dee Surgical Group.

Meanwhile, 32-year-old Greg scheduled a colonoscopy. He followed medical advice that the test be performed ten years prior to the age that a first degree relative (his mother) was diagnosed with colon cancer.

During Greg's colonoscopy, Dr. Timothy Spurling of Pee Dee Gastroenterology found a polyp. After removing it, the polyp was sent off for a biopsy which confirmed there were cancerous cells within it. Dr. Spurling recommended that Greg also have a colon resection to remove this area.

# "THINK SMALL"

## McLeod Offers the Latest in Colon Surgery

by Sage L. Andrews and Leah M. Rank

"Both Don and Greg had colon disease that warranted the need for surgery, or a colon resection," said Dr. John Sonfield of Pee Dee Surgical Group, who performed the surgery for both of the Goldman brothers. "During a colon resection, part and sometimes all of the colon is removed."

"A colon resection can be performed one of two ways: the traditional 'open' colon resection, or laparoscopically," said Dr. Sonfield. "Don and Greg both had the laparoscopic option, which holds many benefits for a patient. In this procedure, one five-centimeter incision and two one-centimeter incisions are made, compared with the traditional colon resection which involves a 10 to 15 centimeter incision. This minimally invasive procedure is the latest in colorectal surgery. It is less painful, leaves smaller scars, has a faster recovery time, and requires a shorter hospital stay. All of these factors allow the patient to return home earlier and resume their everyday activities more quickly."

The physicians at Pee Dee Surgical Group say that most people are candidates for the laparoscopic method, and their patients have been pleased with the results in all aspects.

Don said his experience with Pee Dee



Brothers Don and Greg Goldman are each doing well today after both men underwent colon resection surgery at McLeod to treat colon cancer.

Surgical Group at McLeod Health was excellent. "Dr. Sonfield is great. I felt reassured by him, and very comfortable." Don said that Dr. Sonfield thoroughly explained the procedure to him and made his wife, Rose, feel completely at ease. Don returned to his job as Chief Financial Officer at U.S. Waste Industries in Walterboro the week after returning home to do some light work. His brother Greg also had a great recovery, and was even able to get out of his bed the same day of surgery. Both brothers were walking up and down the hospital halls during the following days of their hospital stay. Greg also returned to his job as Crew Chief with Nesbitt Surveying in Timmonsville the week after returning home.

According to the American Cancer Society, screenings for colon disease

should begin at age 50 for men and women at an average risk, and earlier for those at an increased or high risk. Screenings such as a colonoscopy for colon disease can detect polyps and cancerous cells. A polyp is an abnormal growth of extra tissue that can occur in the colon. "Polyps grow very slowly and over time can turn into cancer,"

said Dr. Amy Murrell, also of Pee Dee Surgical Group. "Most polyps don't cause symptoms. Often, people don't know they have one until they are found during a screening colonoscopy. Larger polyps can evolve into colon cancer and are therefore all removed in their entirety."

Today, both brothers have resumed their normal activities. Both are volunteer fireman and Lieutenants for the Sumter County Fire Department, and Don also volunteers for the Olanta Fire Department and serves on Florence County's COBRA Team as well. Three weeks post surgery, Greg says he "feels great." Don adds, "You gotta do what you gotta do and move on."