

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 10, 2018

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Children's Hospital Offers Advanced Testing for Constipation

PENSACOLA, Fla. — Children suffering from constipation or who have issues soiling themselves now have access to the latest testing to help diagnose and treat their issues, thanks to the purchase of new anorectal manometry, or ARM, equipment at [The Studer Family Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart](#).

Used by the [pediatric gastroenterologists](#) at The Children's Hospital, ARM studies the nerves and muscles of the anus and rectum, testing whether children have normal sensation and are using their muscles correctly to hold and pass stool.

This test is done in children with difficult to treat constipation, abnormalities of the anus (anal malformations) and fecal incontinence (children who are past the age of toilet training and unable to stop stool from leaking).

During an ARM, a pediatric gastroenterologist places a small, soft, flexible tube into the rectum. The tube is attached to a balloon on one end and a computer on the other end. The pediatric gastroenterologist slowly inflates and deflates the balloon. At the same time, the computer records the activity of the nerves and muscles inside the rectum. The doctor may ask the child to squeeze down on the tube, to try pushing the tube out of the rectum or to describe the feeling of the balloon inflating. If a child is too young to hold still, the specially trained pediatric specialists at The Children's Hospital may give the child medicine to help him or her sleep. This test is not uncomfortable for the child, but a lubricating gel is applied to the child's anus prior to ARM to ease the process.

ARM is an outpatient test. Children may go home the same day and are able to resume their normal activities. The test may also be used for patients admitted to The Children's Hospital and can be performed before or after a child's surgery to check that the rectal muscles and nerves are working properly.

[Pediatric gastroenterologists Dr. Alan Sacks and Dr. Robert Dillard](#) are on the faculty of the University of Florida College of Medicine, part of UF Health. The college is affiliated with The Studer Family Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart. Dr. Sacks and Dr. Dillard practice full-time at The Children's Hospital and in their outpatient office, which is located on Sacred Heart's Pensacola campus at 1657 Trinity Drive. For more information, please call pediatric gastroenterology at 850-416-1157.

The Studer Family Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart is a 117-bed facility that serves as the only children's hospital in Northwest Florida. The Children's Hospital offers a wide range of services to meet all of a child's medical needs, from a pediatric emergency room and neonatal intensive care unit to a medical staff of more than 120 board-certified physicians across 30 pediatric specialties. The Children's

Hospital provides quality, compassionate care to children, regardless of their parents' ability to pay. Sacred Heart Health System is a member of Ascension, the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world's largest Catholic health system. For more information about the services available at The Studer Family Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart, visit studerfamilychildrenshospital.com.

About Sacred Heart Health System

In Florida, Ascension operates Sacred Heart Health based in Pensacola and St. Vincent's HealthCare based in Jacksonville. Together, Ascension operates seven hospitals and more than 100 other sites of care, and they employ nearly 10,000 associates. Across the region, Sacred Heart and St. Vincent's have served North Florida communities for more than 145 years. In fiscal year 2017, they provided \$168 million in community benefit and care of persons living in poverty. Ascension (www.ascension.org) is a faith-based healthcare organization dedicated to transformation through innovation across the continuum of care. As the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world's largest Catholic health system, Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. Ascension includes approximately 165,000 associates and 34,000 aligned providers. Ascension's Healthcare Division operates more than 2,600 sites of care – including 153 hospitals and more than 50 senior living facilities – in 22 states and the District of Columbia. For more information on Sacred Heart Health System, visit www.sacred-heart.org.

About University of Florida Health

UF Health is the Southeast's most comprehensive academic health center. With main campuses in Gainesville and Jacksonville, UF Health includes six health colleges, eight research centers and institutes, two teaching hospitals, six specialty hospitals and a host of physician medical practices and outpatient services throughout North Central and Northeast Florida. Its mission is to promote health through outstanding and high-quality patient care, innovative and rigorous education in the health professions and biomedical sciences, and high-impact research across the spectrum of basic, translational and clinical investigation.

UF Health includes the UF colleges of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health and Health Professions, and Veterinary Medicine, which has both a large animal hospital and a small animal hospital. The system also encompasses several UF research institutes and centers. The full spectrum of patient-care services are provided through UF Health Shands Hospital and UF Health Jacksonville, UF's private, not-for-profit affiliates. UF Health Shands in Gainesville includes UF Health Shands Children's Hospital, UF Health Shands Cancer Hospital, the UF Health Heart & Vascular Hospital and the UF Health Neuromedicine Hospital. Two additional specialty hospitals, UF Health Shands Rehab Hospital and UF Health Shands Psychiatric Hospital, are also in Gainesville. UF Health Jacksonville and UF Health North Hospital are the system's Northeast Florida hospitals. UF Health offers a network of outpatient rehabilitation centers, two home health agencies in Gainesville and Jacksonville, and more than 100 UF physician outpatient practices throughout North Central and Northeast Florida.