

Hi-Tech Body Scans Could Help Diagnose Diseases

If you worry about your health, a new "Body Scanning" procedure could be for you.

But some say, it is a high tech, and sometimes a risky waste of money.

Hi-tech imaging tools, that give a head to toe view inside the body, have revolution the diagnosis of diseases like cancer.

University of North Carolina radiologist Richard Semelka M.D., "It is a logical thing to think maybe if we looked at people when they were healthy we could look at cancers at an earlier stage when they are treatable."

A proactive approach that is not endorsed by the medical community,

University of North Carolina radiologist Paul Molina M.D., "To my knowledge I am not aware of any studies to date that have shown that whole-body ct screening either prolongs lives or is cost effective."

And there are risks, like radiation exposure from CT scans and false positive findings.

Insurance does not cover full body scans in healthy people.

Dr. Semelka believes the MRI will pave the way for full-body or targeted check-ups.

He says it does not carry the radiation risks, and notes it is possible to scan the entire body in less than 20 minutes.

But Semelka is not ready to rule out the high tech check-up.

He is researching the role of MRI.

Dr. Semelka says, "It may be targeted or it may be whole body, but clearly for this to be something that will be used widely, it has to be patients where there is a substantial risk for disease."

Semelka envisions a day, not too far away, where a genetic screening blood test will help doctors determine who are candidates.

Dr. Semelka says, "With this genetic make up you have a predisposition of breast cancer so you will be a breast Mr."

But for now, the role of imaging in prevention is still under study, and not a recommended part of the regular check-up.