

# A team approach of health care

*In addition to evaluation and treatment of GI disorders, Premier GI's focus extends to preventive care and patient education*

Each year 62 million Americans are diagnosed with a digestive disorder, according to the GI Alliance. One of the best ways a person can maintain and improve their digestive health is to visit a gastroenterologist on a regular basis.

Premier GI specializes in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of a range of gastrointestinal (GI) conditions, including abdominal pain, colon polyps, colon cancer screening, constipation, diarrhea, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, hemorrhoids, gastroesophageal reflux disease, Barrett's esophagus, difficulty with swallowing, peptic ulcer, GI bleed, blood loss anemia, celiac disease, IBS, women's digestive health, hepatitis, cirrhosis, gallstone disease, pancreatic cysts and pancreatic cancer. The state-of-the-art practice is located at 2271 Route 33, Suite 110 in Hamilton.



**Dr. Shivaprasad Marulendra**

A person's day-to-day well-being is centered on their gut health, according to Dr. Shivaprasad Marulendra, who co-founded the practice with his wife, Dr. Punitha Shivaprasad. "A recent medical study examined how people rate their quality of life with various underlying conditions. The study considered congestive heart failure, emphysema, depression and GI disorders. To our surprise, an upset in GI health came up as having the most negative impact on a person's everyday quality of life. This underscores how important both gut health and adequate nutrition are for general health, longevity and one's ability to carry out daily tasks."

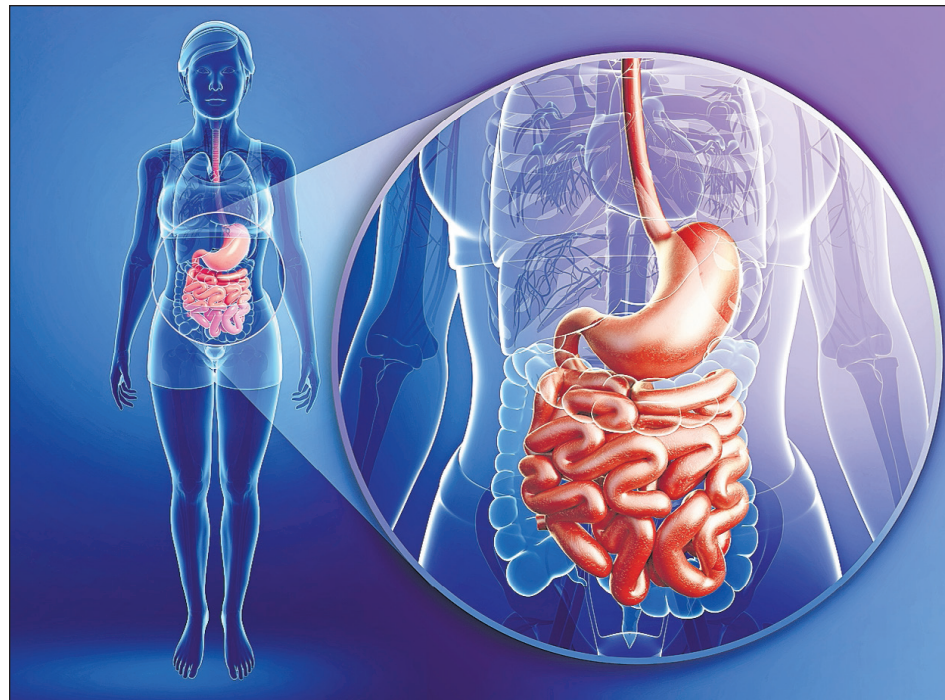
At Premier GI, the focus is not only on the evaluation and treatment of GI disorders, but also on preventive care and patient



**Dr. Punitha Shivaprasad**

education. "Prevention is an important component of GI health," Dr. Marulendra said. "Gastrointestinal cancers are among the most common cancers in the United States today. Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, and about 150,000 cases of colon cancer are diagnosed every year. When you also consider pancreatic and bile duct cancers, and esophageal and gastric cancers, we see that GI cancers are an extremely common type of cancer with a high mortality rate. With all these cancers, early diagnosis and early treatment is key, which is why preventive care is so extremely important."

**Premier GI also treats a large number of patients suffering from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) which can involve a number of different symptoms, including abdominal pain, cramping, gas, diarrhea, and constipation.**



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"Each person is different, and we work with patients to find a treatment that works for them. IBS is particularly common in young people and really can be a significant detriment to someone's day-to-day living, and their ability to pursue an education or maintain a productive professional life," Dr. Shivaprasad said.

As a small, independently owned practice, Premier GI provides a greater level of personalization and responsiveness to patient needs. Drs. Marulendra and Shivaprasad pride themselves on getting to know each patient and treating them like friends and family.

"When I see a patient, it is almost like old friends meeting again; it's very fulfilling and satisfying to develop these relationships. I am now treating entire families, many of whom have been my patients for generations. Since our practice opened in this location about two-and-one-half years ago we have grown faster than I ever could have imagined — all through word of mouth.

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Our entire staff — from the front desk to my medical assistant and scheduler — share the same patient-centered, team approach," Dr. Marulendra said.

To accommodate its growth, Premier GI recently announced that Dr. Joshua Weston is joining the practice.

"The addition of Dr. Weston ensures that our patients always will have access to one of our physicians, both in the office as well as in the hospital setting. Dr. Weston shares our commitment to providing quality and compassionate care, and we are excited to have someone of his caliber join our team."

For more information on Premier GI or to schedule an appointment, call 609-917-9917 or visit [www.premiergiiofhamilton.com](http://www.premiergiiofhamilton.com).

— Lori Crowell