

## **FOX NEWS**

### **New Incisionless Surgery Offers Hope to Heartburn Sufferers**

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

#### **A new cutting-edge procedure could offer hope to the millions of Americans plagued by acid reflux.**

Surgeons at The Ohio State University Medical Center have performed the first incisionless operations in the United States to stop gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), also known as heartburn. They did it by using a device, known as EsophyX, which was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

"The medical device offers a treatment for patients who suffer from an advanced degree of GERD and, until now, would have been candidates for (traditional) surgery," said Dr. Scott Melvin, director of the Center for Minimally Invasive Surgery at OSU Medical Center, in a news release.

Almost 30 million Americans are diagnosed with chronic reflux disease and millions of dollars are spent on over-the-counter and prescription medications for treatment of the condition. The new procedure leaves no outside scarring, results in minimal, if any, post-operative pain and reduces recovery time significantly, according to Melvin.

"Throughout medical history, we have gone from a very painful surgery to a better tolerated surgery and, now, to a potentially pain-free incisionless procedure," said Melvin, who is also the division director of general and gastrointestinal surgery at the medical center.

"In addition, the new procedure allows a treatment option for many patients when reflux is not severe enough to require surgery," he added.

Heartburn occurs when acid refluxes from the stomach into the esophagus. The burning sensation felt in the chest can last for countless hours, resulting from inflammation, bleeding or ulcers in the esophagus. GERD is known to be associated with an increased risk of cancer of the esophagus.

The incisionless surgery allows reconstruction of the one-way valve at the top of the stomach, when the valve is defective. The new tubular device is introduced to the body totally through the mouth, and is then advanced down the esophagus into the stomach. During the procedure, the operation is viewed through a small fiberoptic camera located within the tubular surgical tools. Patients are normally in the hospital overnight and, after the procedure, are symptom-free.

"We are far from incisionless technology's adoption for widespread use with other diseases, but there is a lot of discussion among surgeons about these new techniques," said Melvin. "Our use of this type of technology will continue to allow us to treat many diseases with minimal pain from surgery."