



# Relieving Chronic Heartburn

*New incisionless surgery may be solution for GERD sufferers*



**E**ating is one of life's fundamental pleasures for most people. Savoring the flavor of a rich chocolate or enjoying the taste of a good wine is often coupled with the social fulfillment of family and friends. But for those with chronic heartburn, even a cup of coffee can turn into an unpleasant experience.

Eleanor Fryer of Portage knows the pain and frustration of chronic heartburn too well. Diagnosed with GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease), Fryer's chronic heartburn was severe enough to affect her daily life.

"It made no difference what I ate," says Fryer. "Three bites and I was done. I could feel the heartburn coming on."

Like many GERD sufferers, Fryer's discomfort would last throughout the day and would keep her awake at night. Burning in her esophagus, coughing and constant clearing of her throat continued despite her efforts to control what and when she ate, and the medications she took.

"The pills you're supposed to take once a day ... I took three or four times and they still didn't work," says Fryer. "There was no relief for me and I was miserable."

Thankfully for Fryer, and others diagnosed with GERD, St. Mary Medical Center offers a new and effective treatment alternative. Gastroenterologists Peter Mavrelis, M.D., and Ahmad Shughoury, M.D., and general surgeon Dennis Streeter, D.O., are the first specialists in Northern Indiana trained to perform a new, incisionless procedure called EsophyX TIF.

## REPAIRING THE VALVE

EsophyX TIF (transoral incisionless fundoplication) allows physicians to reconstruct and repair the junction and valve between the esophagus and stomach without incisions. This new solution helps those with GERD who no longer benefit from reflux medications.

GERD is caused by reflux and regurgitation of stomach acid into the esophagus. In normal swallowing, a valve between the esophagus and stomach opens to allow food to pass into the stomach then closes to prevent reflux of the food back into the esophagus. For those with GERD, this valve is weakened or absent, allowing the acidic digestive juices to flow back (or reflux) into the esophagus.

GERD is typically treated with medications called proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). PPIs can lose their

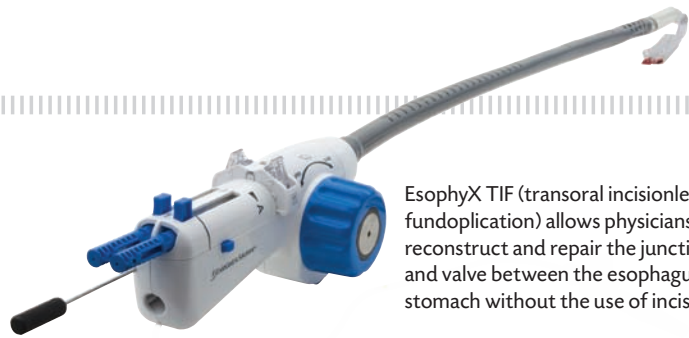
effectiveness over time, requiring progressively higher dosing. Research shows that of the approximately 30 million Americans diagnosed with chronic GERD and dependent on daily medications, 20 to 40 percent are not satisfied with PPIs.

“Reflux medications like PPI can help relieve patients’ heartburn symptoms, but don’t solve the underlying anatomical problems to prevent further disease progression,” says Mavrelis. “GERD is an anatomical problem that needs an anatomical solution. Even on PPIs, many patients are still unable to eat the foods they want or have to sleep sitting up to reduce nighttime reflux. The TIF procedure using the EsophyX device can significantly improve the quality of life for our patients.”

## NO INCISION MEANS NO SCAR

The new EsophyX TIF procedure is based on the idea of surgical repair of the anti-reflux barrier, except that it’s “surgery from within” performed through the mouth and down the throat. The procedure reduces hiatal hernia and creates a valve between the stomach and esophagus, restoring the natural, physiological anatomy to prevent acid reflux. Because the procedure requires no incisions, there is reduced pain, shorter recovery and no visible scar.


“EsophyX TIF can significantly improve the quality of life for our patients,” says Shughoury. “Many reflux patients are unable to drink carbonated or caffeinated beverages or eat rich foods or fruit without triggering reflux. After the procedure, most patients can eat and drink food they avoided for many years. Reflux no longer impacts their lives like it previously did.”



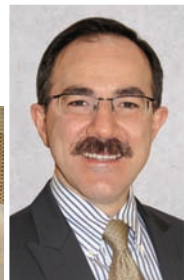
EsophyX TIF (transoral incisionless fundoplication) allows physicians to reconstruct and repair the junction and valve between the esophagus and stomach without the use of incisions.

“EsophyX TIF can be an effective long-term solution to GERD,” adds Streeter. “Clinical results are comparable to more invasive GERD surgical treatments, but with fewer side effects. And because it is incisionless, it minimizes patient downtime, allowing them to return to normal activities within a few days.”

Fryer was one of the first patients at St. Mary Medical Center to undergo the EsophyX TIF procedure. She says that her recovery was trouble-free, but after years of suffering, she was still anxious when it came to eating. For Fryer, the true test came in the form of a plate full of scrambled eggs.

“I was so nervous to eat them,” she says. “But I did, and you know what? They tasted great!” 

*“After the procedure, most patients can eat and drink food they avoided for many years.”*



Gastroenterologists Peter Mavrelis, M.D. (right), and Ahmad Shughoury, M.D. (inset) and general surgeon Dennis Streeter, D.O. (left), are the first specialists in Northern Indiana trained to perform a new, incisionless procedure called EsophyX TIF to relieve GERD.

CALL

## Find Relief, Call Us

When heartburn and acid reflux can no longer be managed by over-the-counter medication, and you continue to experience GERD, ask for a referral to the gastroenterologists at the hospitals of Community Healthcare System. Call **219-836-3477** or toll-free **866-836-3477**.

