

Acid reflux sufferers have a new option

According to Dr. Douglas Cummins, there are options for Plainviewans suffering from esophageal, or acid, reflux.

"You don't have to suffer through it anymore," he said.



CUMMINS

Cummins, of Plainview Surgical Center located in Suite 105 of the John C. Anderson Medical Building, has been offering a new procedure called Transoral Incisionless Fundoplication (TIF) since last July.

"It is a minimally invasive way of treating esophageal reflux (a condition in which the stomach contents leak backwards from the

stomach into the esophagus)," Cummins explained.

"Instead of making an incision and going in to repair the damage, we attach an apparatus known as an Esophyxx to a stomach scope," he said. "We lower it down to the stomach and take the floppy tissue of the stomach and wrap it around the esophagus and fire fasteners that are similar to stitches into the tissue to hold it together."

All of this is done while the patient is under general anesthesia.

"With the new TIF procedure, patients usually spend one night in the hospital and are normally ready to go home the next day," Cummins said. "With the traditional procedure, you are usually

looking at a two-night stay in the hospital."

Because there is no incision, the chance of infection is dramatically reduced for patients. Cummins noted other side effects to this type of repair, including bloating and the inability to relieve pressure, are "all but eliminated."

The recovery time after the TIF procedure is greatly reduced as well.

"When a patient undergoes the laproscopic method, they are generally off work for about two weeks," said Cummins. "Folks with a desk job can be back at work in three to five days after TIF."

Cummins estimates that 75 percent of the people he sees for treatment of acid reflux are candidates for TIF.

"The biggest hurdle we see to this procedure is if the patient has a hiatal hernia (a condition in which a portion of the stomach protrudes upward into the chest) through an opening in the diaphragm. The diaphragm is the sheet of muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen. We have to go in and fix that hole first, then we can do the TIF," he said.

Cummins is excited about the level of response patients have had to the idea of the new procedure. "About 75 percent of the

patients I have talked to about the procedure have chosen to go through it rather than suffer the acid reflux," he said.

Cummins indicated patients go through a preliminary diagnostic scope to determine the anatomy of the problem and a 48-hour test where data on the pH level of the patients blood is gathered before scheduling the procedure.

To visit with Cummins or to hear more about the TIF procedure, contact his office at 296-9300 or pick up a brochure by visiting Plainview Surgical Center in Suite 105 of the John C. Anderson Medical Building, next to Covenant Hospital Plainview.