



Surgery Treats Heartburn With No Cutting - Doctors Find New Treatment For Dealing With Acid Reflux

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For many Americans, dealing with everyday heartburn can be annoying but a new medical procedure could eliminate that discomfort.

Charles Henderly had heartburn and knows just how painful it is.

"I was taking probably Maalox three times a day and I was probably taking Tums almost like candy," Henderly said.

Henderly has been dealing with heartburn for nearly 30 years. In fact, his heartburn got so bad, he was unable to sleep in his own bed.

"I'd try to go to bed and a half hour after I'd lay my head down and close my eyes, I would almost have like a regurgitation in my mouth so I'd come downstairs and get in the recliner," Henderly said.

He wanted to eliminate his heartburn once and for all so he tried a surgical procedure using a device called the Esophyx.

A tube goes through the mouth and down the esophagus into the stomach. Surgeons are then able to rebuild the valve at the bottom of the esophagus, stopping acid reflux immediately.

Dr. Scott Melvin, gastrointestinal surgeon at The Ohio State University, said this procedure is another option for those who are finding traditional treatment options useless.

"Some people can't continue to take the medication. Either they can't afford it, they have side effects or they just don't want to be on a pill every day. Other patients don't have good relief with symptoms with the medication alone. Those are really the two groups of patients that do quite well with the procedure," Melvin said. "Most patients do quite well and are able to get off medication."

This new procedure allows patients to go home the day after and is covered by some insurance companies. While early trials have worked, it will not replace traditional acid reflux surgery, but will enable more patients who suffer from chronic acid reflux to get treatment.

There are some options for people before resorting to this procedure. Over-the-counter and prescription drugs can be used to treat acid reflux. Other treatments include weight loss, elevating the position of the bed and sleeping on your left side.