

## **STRETTA**

### **What is STRETTA?**

The STRETTA catheter is a specially designed, FDA approved, device with a balloon and four needles. The catheter is connected to a control module, which delivers precisely monitored and controlled amounts of radio-frequency energy to the lower esophageal sphincter muscle or LES. This will bulk

The entire procedure consists of two parts. Initially, an upper endoscopy or EGD is performed while the patient is sedated. This allows the physician to take precise measurements of the distance from the mouth to the LES or sphincter muscle between the esophagus and stomach. After measuring the distance, the physician will then insert the STRETTA catheter, through the mouth, to the specifically measured distance. The balloon is then inflated, the needles pushed into the muscle of the sphincter, and radio-frequency energy is transmitted via the needles

### **How the STRETTA procedure corrects GERD**

When the STRETTA procedure is performed, radio-frequency energy is transmitted via the needles in the STRETTA catheter. This creates pinpoint areas of heat in the sphincter muscle, which in turn stimulates the muscle causing an increase in muscle bundles and muscle fibers in each bundle. The net effect is that the sphincter is remodeled and becomes thicker, stronger and longer (like the muscles of a weight lifter).

There are two predominant effects, which then occur. The first effect is largely temporary and can be thought of as the *barrier effect*. There is an immediate swelling or edema of the tissue, which is followed by the body depositing a substance called collagen into the sphincter muscle. The thickened area helps to immediately reduce the reflux of stomach contents into the esophagus.

### **What to expect after the STRETTA procedure**

Immediately after the procedure, due to the sedation, you may expect to feel very tired for the remainder of the day. Some patients have a sore throat or mild soreness in the chest area. You will be able to eat with some mild dietary restrictions and resume your normal medications immediately after the procedure. When eating you may experience a sensation of the food moving slowly down into your stomach.

You must continue your acid controlling medications, until instructed otherwise, by your physician for at least an additional 4-8 weeks.

Your reflux symptoms are *not* expected to improve immediately. The effects usually develop slowly over time. It is very important that you *do not expect immediate results*. It may sometimes take as long as 8-12 months before the final improvements take place.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

1. Do *not* eat any foods with hard or sharp edges for 4-5 days, such as chips, pretzels, nuts, or popcorn. Chew your food well, and do not eat rapidly.
2. Do *not* forget to take your acid lowering medication, such as Prilosec, Prevacid, Protonix, Aciphex, Dexilant, Zantac, Prevacid or Nexium, for at least the first month after your procedure. If you are not taking these medications you must immediately tell your doctor.
3. Do resume normal activities as tolerated, including exercise, the day following the STRETTA procedure.
4. Do call your doctor immediately if you experience any of the following:
  - a. Severe chest or abdominal pain
  - b. Nausea or vomiting
  - c. Fever or chills
  - d. Vomiting of blood or coffee ground appearing material
  - e. Bloody or black tarry looking bowel movements
  - f. Difficulty swallowing
  - g. Difficulty breathing

### **Side Effects**

The main side effect experienced after a STRETTA procedure is chest discomfort or pain. The discomfort ranges from a mild sensation of pressure or aching to intense pain. Up to 50% of patients experience chest discomfort and only 1-2% have severe pain. Your physician will supply you with detailed instructions on what medications to take for the pain and a prescription for a strong pain medication. The pain will normally only last 1~5 days, but rarely up to 1-2 weeks. If you have any questions at all contact your physician

### **How fast will I get better?**

This is the both the most frequent and most important question. It is very important to *not* expect an immediate or instant improvement after the procedure. It takes at least 2 weeks for the tissue to heal, which is when a few patients may begin to experience some initial relief from their symptoms.

Everyone is different in their ability to heal. This process may take as long as 8-12 months to occur, but for many it occurs by 3-5 months.