

# Treating Acid Reflux

“I’m in my last semester of nursing school,” reports Claire Norcross.

Unfortunately, Claire had a significant medical problem of her own.

“I had chronic GERD, or Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease,” she explains. “It was so serious that it actually caused me to have asthma. If it refluxed at night, it could aspirate into my lungs.”

Commonly known as acid reflux, GERD is a chronic condition which causes frequent heartburn, or acid indigestion. The disease causes stomach contents to rise up into the esophagus, which can in turn lead to other health problems. For Claire, the problem went beyond being merely troublesome.

“It was becoming somewhat dangerous,” she acknowledges. “I have a trigger and that is perfume. Anytime I walked into a room where people were wearing perfume and it filled the room, I would have a severe asthma attack and it would actually close my trachea.”

Claire tried a variety of methods to alleviate her GERD symptoms without any success.

“For two years, I tried everything: sleeping upright on pillows, not eating for three hours before sleep, restricting the diet . . . nothing was working.”

Claire consulted board-certified specialist Domingo E. Galliano, Jr., MD.

“I started going to Dr. Galliano to find out what was going on and if we could fix it. He did the first endoscopy, and then I went and had an upper endoscopy.”

Dr. Galliano informed Claire that there was a no-incision option for her — a non-surgical, non-medication treatment for GERD now being offered at Fawcett Memorial Hospital in Port Charlotte.

“Fawcett Memorial Hospital offers three major types of surgery: traditional, open surgery, which requires comparatively long incisions; laparoscopic, or small incision, minimally invasive surgery; and now natural orifice transendoscopic surgery, or NOTES, which is surgery without incisions,” describes Dr. Galliano. “NOTES is surgery performed through any natural orifice, so no incisions are required. It is very state-of-the-art; there are only about twenty-five hospitals in the US that offer it.

“NOTES goes way beyond laparoscopic surgery, and Fawcett Memorial Hospital has gone a long way in helping us with the technology.”

“I’m familiar with all three area hospitals both from my experience doing clinicals at the hospitals and from my husband and daughter being patients,” notes Claire. “My husband has had three surgeries at Fawcett Memorial and has been in their ICU [Intensive Care Unit] three times, and I just find the care level to be very good. I chose Fawcett Memorial as the hospital where I wanted to have my procedure done.”

The procedure Claire chose is called Transoral Incisionless Fundoplication, or EsophyX TIF.

## The solution

The EsophyX TIF is a procedure for treatment of moderate to severe acid reflux disease. Dr. Galliano observes that he and board-certified specialist Alvaro Bada, MD, are the only physicians in the area who perform EsophyX TIF, and that Fawcett Memorial Hospital is the only hospital where they perform it.

“Although advocated early on for moderate to severe patients, anti-reflux surgery has historically been reserved

GERD is a problem for many patients, and medication can be both costly and inconvenient. Now, a minimally invasive, no-incision procedure is available at Fawcett Memorial Hospital.



Claire Norcross says she truly appreciates Dr. Galliano and the staff of Fawcett Memorial Hospital.

## FAWCETT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

### No-incision Gastrointestinal Surgery

No blood loss or scarring

Shorter hospital stay

Reduced patient discomfort

Faster recovery time

Higher patient satisfaction

For more information on the EsophyX TIF, or to see a short animated video of the procedure, visit EndoGastric Solutions on the web at

[www.endogastricsolutions.com](http://www.endogastricsolutions.com)

surgical table and definitely less invasive than laparoscopic fundoplication,” assures Claire. “It has a much quicker recovery time because you’re not having to deal with an abdominal incision.”

The quick recovery time in particular appealed to the busy nursing student.

“You’re not having to deal with six weeks of recovery; in seven to ten days, you can return to work,” she says.

“I was up and about quickly and my energy level was back within nine days of surgery. I’ve had surgery before, and I was wondering if I was going to get my energy level back at the end of six weeks. With this, it was just over a week and I was back to normal!”

She says she truly appreciates Dr. Galliano and the staff of Fawcett Memorial Hospital.

“Dr. Galliano is very professional, very knowledgeable,” she says, “and he really cares about his patients. The hospital staff members are very professional and caring, too. They were very helpful in pre-op and did their best to get me out in a short period of time. The day of surgery was really nice.”

And the results are already proving a source of relief to Claire: “So far I have not felt any reflux and my asthma has gone away. That’s a good thing. I’m doing really well.”

FHCN—Kris Kline

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for patients with more severe or very recalcitrant disease that’s not responding to medication or failing to respond as well as it used to,” points out Dr. Bada.

“Consequently, because physicians are waiting later in the course of the disease to offer their patients a surgical procedure, these patients usually have much more anatomic deterioration. Sometimes they respond less than ideally to the traditional surgical intervention just because they’re not the most ideal patients to begin with for that surgery. Part of that has been due to the concept that surgery itself can be very invasive.”

Enter the EsophyX TIF.

“For the first time, we have a viable solution that follows the same surgical principles that are used with a laparoscopic or open procedure,” continues Dr. Bada, “but we’re doing it with a device that can follow those same procedures, by and large, completely through the mouth. In this NOTES procedure, the patient does not end up with an incision through the abdomen.

“The EsophyX TIF procedure is an excellent alternative to lifelong medication management. As patients are starting to find that they have less response to the medications — or if they’re starting to go on higher and higher doses — they may be candidates for this procedure. That means they don’t have to wait until the disease has gotten so bad that they have a complication such as stricture or something of that nature. They may be able to have the procedure done *earlier*.”

The EsophyX TIF procedure is much less invasive than laparoscopic or open surgery, reminds Dr. Bada, and postoperative care, in terms of side effects, is minimal.

“Patients don’t have the same problems with gas, bloating, or difficulty swallowing that we typically see in a fair number of patients receiving a laparoscopic or open procedure.

“The fact is, we are following the same principles as what you would see with general or open surgery, but we’re doing it through the mouth. Therefore, this is truly a transoral surgical procedure. Putting *transoral* and *surgical* together is the key.

“I think it represents a real shift in the paradigm of how to treat patients,” reflects Dr. Galliano, “and it offers these people who have more moderate to severe GERD a chance to have a surgical procedure done which is more of an anatomic correction.”

## Real relief

Claire says the EsophyX TIF treatment was the right one for her.

“The EsophyX Fundoplication is less time on the

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## Fawcett Memorial Hospital

Fawcett Memorial Hospital is a 238-bed, full-service acute care hospital serving Charlotte County and the surrounding areas. It accommodates traditional as well as advanced, minimally invasive surgical services including NOTES, and its staff is on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Along with clinical specialties and many outpatient programs, Fawcett also provides a variety of community wellness programs as part of its ongoing commitment to community outreach and education.

