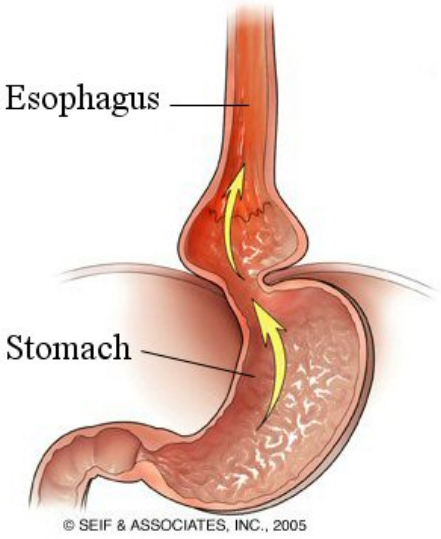
STRETTA Procedure

Treatment of GERD (Gastro-esophageal reflux disease) has usually consisted of the three following treatments:

- **Lifestyle modification** is effective in about one in five patients. It requires changes in lifestyle, eating habits and diet. Specific lifestyle changes include:
  - Not eating 30 minutes prior to bed.
  - Avoiding chocolate.
  - Avoiding caffeine.
  - Avoiding spicy foods.
  - Avoiding red wine.
  - Stop smoking.
  - Lose weight.
- **Drug therapy** consists of daily doses of medicine. These medicines are most effective when taken on a continuous basis. These medicines do not stop reflux but simply reduce it. These medicines frequently cause side effects of nausea and diarrhea. About one third of GERD patients continue to get worse while on medications.
- **Major invasive surgery** used for treatment is the Nissen fundoplication. This laparoscopic procedure requires a hospital stay of 1-3 days. Patients are usually back to work in a few days. The procedure involves wrapping the upper stomach around the esophagus. This recreates the lower esophageal sphincter (LES). This improves the barrier between the stomach and esophagus. This prevents acid reflux. Specially trained physicians perform this 1-3 hour procedure.



A NEW PROCEDURE IS CALLED THE STRETTA PROCEDURE

The Stretta Procedure is minimally invasive. It is an *outpatient* (an overnight hospital stay is not required) procedure. It is a minor procedure. A caregiver uses an instrument like a slim flexible telescope (*endoscope*). The caregiver delivers controlled levels of radio frequency (heat energy). The caregiver applies this heat energy to the area of the sphincter between the esophagus and the stomach. This creates thermal lesions (similar to burned areas). When the burns heal, the barrier function of the sphincter is improved. This reduces reflux incidents. Generally, there is no hospital stay involved with the Stretta Procedure. Patients are able to do normal activities the following day. There is minimal discomfort with the Stretta Procedure. Patients may have a sore throat from the endoscope.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE STRETTA PROCEDURE:

- Medicines for GERD relieve heartburn symptoms in most patients. However, regurgitation and other symptoms are typically less controlled. Patients may need medicine for the rest of their lives. Some medicines cause side effects. Side effects discourage patients from taking the drug every day.
- Stretta patients are usually patients with GERD who require medicine to control their symptoms.
- The procedure does not require an inpatient stay.
- The procedure does not require an anesthesiologist. The procedure can be done under conscious sedation. This is when you are semi-awake but have no memory of the procedure afterwards.
- The cost of the procedure is comparable to the cost of one year of drug therapy. Costs will likely vary.
- Most patients will undergo testing before the procedure. This includes a screening endoscopy or barium swallow to evaluate the patient's anatomy.

PATIENTS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HAVE THIS PROCEDURE IF THEY HAVE:

- A large hiatal hernia
- A severe non-healed injury to the esophagus.

Document Released: 08/01/2005 Document Re-Released: 10/20/2009
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.