

New HALO Technology Prevents Esophageal Cancer

Eisenhower Medical Center is the first hospital in the Coachella Valley to offer HALO ablation, a new preventive option for Barrett's Esophagus, a known precursor to esophageal cancer. Barrett's esophagus is estimated to affect about 3.3 million adults in the United States, and 14,000 people succumb to esophageal cancer every year.

Barrett's Esophagus is an abnormal change in the cells at the lower end of the esophagus thought to be caused by damage from chronic acid exposure. Individuals suffering from heartburn (acid reflux, gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD) are at risk for developing Barrett's Esophagus. The diseased esophageal tissue that is found in Barrett's Esophagus significantly increases an individual's risk for esophageal cancer.

HALO ablation technology (radio frequency ablation) is a very specific type of ablation in which heated energy is delivered in a precise and highly-controlled manner. According to Eisenhower Gastroenterologist and Internist Gary Annunziata, DO, FACP, the technology is perfectly suited to the surgery and condition. "Due to the fact that Barrett's esophageal tissue is very thin, this tissue is ideal for removal with ablative energy," explains Dr. Annunziata. "With HALO ablation, we can completely remove the diseased tissue without damaging normal underlying structures."
"IN THE ABLATION PROCEDURE, THE AFFECTED AREA IN THE ESOPHAGUS IS HEATED UNTIL IT IS DESTROYED, WHICH ALSO BURNS OFF AND REMOVES THE PRECANCEROUS CELLS."

In the ablation procedure, the affected area in the esophagus is heated until it is destroyed, which also burns off and removes the pre-cancerous cells. Clinical studies show that the Barrett's tissue can be completely eliminated using HALO in nearly 100 percent of patients. Previously, there were not many viable treatment options for Barrett's Esophagus.

The procedure is performed on an outpatient basis with no incisions and takes less than 30 minutes. The HALO ablation technology consists of two different devices: the HALO360 and the HALO90 ablation catheters. The HALO360 ablation catheter treats larger areas affected by Barrett's esophagus, while the HALO90 is used to treat smaller areas.

Individuals with Barrett's Esophagus exhibit no warning signs. It is only through an upper endoscopy procedure that a physician can determine the diagnosis and that Barrett's Esophagus can be found.