

New procedure claims to treat sinusitis

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A non-surgical procedure offered by a California firm is seen by some doctors as a breakthrough for treating sinusitis but other experts are not so sure.

The new balloon sinuplasty procedure from the privately held Acclarent, based in Menlo Park, Calif., opens the sinuses without invasive surgery and lets patients to breathe easier and resume normal activity within a day, reports The New York Times.

The procedure, which can cost thousands, has been used on about 500 patients since November 2004 and received favorable media coverage, says the report.

However, the Times reported that two recent studies helped show it is possible to open a sinus with a balloon, but don't say whether sinuplasty provides lasting relief.

The report said under federal drug regulators' rules on medical devices, Acclarent was not required to show its system was either safe or effective before the FDA allowed it to go on the market last year. The company says more research is under way and that sinuplasty is intended to be simply another tool for doctors to use in sinus surgery and is not intended for all patients, the Times reported.

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