

New surgical method relieves heartburn symptoms

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One in three Austrians suffer from heartburn. If the symptoms become chronic, it can lead to serious conditions such as oesophageal cancer. A new surgical method, in which a magnetic ring is positioned almost like a “valve” at the distal end of the oesophagus, now allows the reflux of gastric acid to be prevented. This surgical method has been carried out successfully for the first time in the University Department of Surgery at the MedUni Vienna at the Vienna General Hospital by Sebastian Schoppmann and Martin Riegler.

The new procedure is called the LINX [Reflux](#) Management System and comprises a magnetic, mobile string of beads that is positioned around the outlet of the oesophagus and replaces the natural valve mechanism that no longer functions properly in patients with [heartburn](#). “The system prevents the reflux of gastric acid into the oesophagus, thereby stopping

the symptoms associated with the condition such as heartburn or acid reflux,” says Schoppmann.

“The implantation of the Reflux Management System is minimally invasive, is carried out via four small incisions and a laparoscopy and takes around half an hour,” explains Schoppmann. “First, the circumference of the oesophagus is measured so that the ring can be adapted to fit perfectly.”

The patient can swallow again perfectly normally immediately after the operation and is able to eat normally again the very next day. “This treatment represents an innovative therapeutic option for patients that will permanently relieve them of unpleasant symptoms in a relatively straightforward manner. Their quality of life is improved considerably,” says Riegler, Head of Functional Diagnostics at the University Department of Surgery.

Provided by Medical University of Vienna

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