

# Laparoscopic Fundoplication

## **Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)**

GERD is a problem suffered by almost 10 million Americans. There is a “Valve” between the feeding tube (or esophagus) and the stomach called the lower esophageal sphincter. Normally, this valve allows food to pass through the esophagus and into the stomach but keeps the stomach acid from washing back up the esophagus. This backwash is called reflux. GERD is the result of a lax valve. When this valve becomes lax, the acid refluxes and irritates the esophagus. This irritation may cause heartburn, reflux can also cause choking at night or a sour taste in the mouth (water brash). To help make the diagnosis, it is important to look at the esophagus to see if it is inflamed. This is done by passing a flexible lighted tube with a camera at the tip through the mouth and esophagus. This procedure is called esophagogastroduodenoscopy or EGD.

## **Treatment**

GERD is initially treated with medication to decrease the acidity of stomach juices. Although medication does not fix the lax valve, reducing the acidity of the juices can make them less irritating to the esophagus. However, if symptoms persist while taking medication, or if an EGD reveals inflammation of the esophagus despite taking acid blocking medication, surgical treatment should be considered.

The fundoplication procedure is an operation which prevents reflux by reinforcing the valve. This is now performed using the laparoscope. A few tiny incisions are made to allow passage of the scope and operating instruments. Surgery using the scope results in less pain, a shorter hospital stay, and small scars. The valve is reinforced by wrapping a floppy part of the stomach around the lower esophagus. After surgery, especially early when there is swelling at the site of the wrap, the valve will be tighter than you are used to. For this reason, you will need to change your diet for a while, as the swelling subsides and you become adjusted to the corrected valve. You may also notice that you have some difficulty belching and feel a bit bloated after surgery. This will eventually diminish as well.

## **After Surgery**

While in the hospital after surgery, you will be given a liquid diet which includes broths and puddings. When you return home, you will need to continue a similar diet for at least one week. You should not eat any meat, leafy vegetables, most fruits, or bread. You should also avoid drinking carbonated beverages during this time. Even mashed potatoes or soups with chunks of meat or vegetables should be avoided initially. At your first office visit after surgery, if you are tolerating the liquid diet without difficulty, we will plan to slowly increase the kinds of foods you can eat, starting with pasta or ground beef in soups and sauces. After two more weeks, you may progress to eating more solid foods as you can tolerate them. Take it slowly, and do not eat any foods which do not seem to pass easily down your food pipe.

As with any operation, you should call the office if you have fever (101.0 or higher) or if you have redness or thick drainage from the wound. You may shower 48 hours after surgery. It is okay to get the steri strips wet. Pat the steri strips dry after the shower and they will gradually come off on their own. The sutures underneath the steri strips are absorbable. The recommended diet schedule is on the next page. Thank you for the opportunity of letting us participate in your health care.

## Recommended Diet after Fundoplication

### 1<sup>st</sup> Week

#### Good Foods

Juices  
Thin soups or broths  
Baby food pureed  
(Fruits or Vegetables)  
Puddings  
Yogurt  
Ice Cream  
Shakes  
Your Medications\*

#### Foods to Avoid

Carbonated beverages  
Chunky soups  
All meats  
Leafy vegetables  
Mashed potatoes  
Bread  
Most fresh or canned  
fruits

\*You may need to crush large tablets like potassium supplements or change to a liquid formulation.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Weeks

(Discuss making these changes at the first office visit.)

#### Slowly add to diet

Pasta  
Ground Beef (or ground chicken/turkey) in soups  
Eggs  
Soft fruits without a peel or skin (mashed bananas are okay)

### 4<sup>th</sup> Week and later

Continue to gradually add solid foods that you find are easy to swallow to your diet.