



**ST. JOHN'S MERCY  
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## News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **New Technology for Chronic Reflux Disorder**

St. John's Mercy Hospital is bringing new technology, the Bravo pH Monitoring System used to diagnose Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), to its GI Lab. Leslie Tucker, M.D., and Carl Blatt, M.D., board-certified gastroenterologists on staff at the Hospital, will lead the diagnostic testing.

GERD is a chronic reflux disorder caused by the esophagus' prolonged exposure to gastric contents. This occurs when the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) is weakened and does not function properly, allowing gastric contents to flow from the stomach back into the esophagus. Gastric contents can irritate the esophagus, causing pain in the form of heartburn and non-cardiac chest pain.

According to the International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders, GERD is a common disorder that affects an estimated 21 million Americans and of that number estimates are that only 12 percent are being optimally managed.

"This disorder can impact a person's quality of life," said Dr. Tucker. "People who suffer from it may avoid routine activities because of the fear of unexpected and severe episodes of this disorder."

The Bravo pH Monitoring System is an alternative to the traditional pH testing method that places catheters through the nose and down the esophagus. The new technology is a catheter-free system which consists of two primary components:

- A small pH capsule about the size of a gelcap that is attached to the wall of the esophagus and transmits data to a receiver
- A pager-sized receiver worn by the patient. Data from the receiver is downloaded to pH software using infrared technology.

The actual procedure is performed in the GI Lab at St. John's Mercy Hospital.

Mildred Barnett, patient at St. John's Mercy Hospital, had had trouble for years. She had experienced the traditional pH testing method and said it was horrifying. "With the tubes through my nose, I couldn't swallow or eat," said stated. "After I learned about this new system, I could not object to trying it. It did not bother me and I was able to go on as usual. It was a good method to help us decide what we need to do. I will be able to go ahead with my surgery and get my life back."

“This new system is an extraordinary advancement for our patients,” said Dr. Blatt. “Patients can eat and drink normally, as well as engage in their usual activities, while having their pH levels tested.”

Dr. Blatt and Dr. Tucker both stated that with the comfort of this new system, they hope to reach more patients who might be suffering from this disorder and have not reached out for help.

Patients with recurrent heartburn and chest pain are encouraged to contact their physician to discuss possible treatments.

For more information about the Bravo pH Monitoring System, please contact the St. John’s Mercy Hospital GI Lab at 636-239-8275 or the office of Drs. Tucker and Blatt at 636-239-7344.

St. John’s Mercy Hospital is a member of the Sisters of Mercy Health System.