



FDA Approved: System Released for Treating Barrett's Esophagus July 2006

As awareness of a condition rises, so do the options for treating it. **BARRX Medical Inc.** (Sunnyvale, Calif) recently attained FDA clearance for its HALO90 system, a balloon-based system for ablating tissue associated with Barrett's Esophagus.

The **HALO90** system can be used in simple outpatient procedures to ablate damaged esophageal tissue.

Until recently, Barrett's Esophagus was known only because of its bookends. Caused by gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and often a precursor to esophageal adenocarcinoma, the condition seemed to be a step along the path from heartburn to cancer. But a Swedish study published in *Gastroenterology*¹ suggests that Barrett's Esophagus is more widespread than most people think. If the Swedish and American populations are analogous in the degree to which they're affected, a full 3 million US residents could be suffering from the disease.



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The Swedish researchers also found that 40% of patients studied showed no symptoms of GERD and, thus, would never be screened for Barrett's Esophagus under current protocol. But treating the condition early has the potential to save thousands of lives.

The HALO90 system—now cleared by the FDA—treats Barrett's Esophagus before it becomes cancer. The device is designed to be used both independently of and along with the HALO360 system, already on the market. The HALO360 is designed to ablate larger areas of damaged esophageal tissue; HALO90 fills in the gaps left behind with a smaller range and increased precision.

An endoscope tipped by a small electrode, the HALO90 can be used in simple, cost-efficient outpatient procedures—in coordination with the imaging technology necessary to navigate the device safely to the damaged tissue.

Reference

1. Ronkainen J, Aro P, Storskrubb T, et al. Prevalence of Barrett's esophagus in the general population: an endoscopic study. *Gastroenterol.* 2005;129(6):1825–1831.