

Mayo Clinic Medical Edge

N37 Subglottic Stenosis

Intro: You have asthma. That's what many people diagnosed with a condition called subglottic stenosis hear from their doctors. They may get misdiagnosed because it's very rare, and it causes your airway to narrow until you're breathing through a very tiny opening. Doctors at Mayo Clinic have developed new ways to treat this issue, that otherwise leaves people gasping for air.

Video

Audio

TRT 1:52 Jill Pottenger-Moe Has subglottic stenosis	"I was breathing through a small five-millimeter opening."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Imagine that – breathing through an opening the size of a cocktail straw. That was reality for Jill Pottenger-Moe who has subglottic stenosis, a condition that happens almost exclusively to women.
Jill Pottenger-Moe Has subglottic stenosis	"It was labored breathing. Apparently people called me Darth Vader because it was (gasp, gasp)."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Just walking through this store would have made Jill profoundly short of breath.
Jill Pottenger-Moe Has subglottic stenosis	"Once I bent down to pick up this pumpkin I would be wheezing and gasping for air, and there's no way I would be able to talk at the same time."
Eric Edell, M.D. Mayo Clinic Pulmonary Medicine	"Idiopathic subglottic stenosis. We use the word idiopathic because we don't know the cause. Subglottic Stenosis in and of itself is a scarring of the main wind pipe right below the vocal chords."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Dr. Eric Edell and his colleagues at Mayo clinic have studied this disease and developed a standardized treatment that helps keep the airway open. Here's how: due to the progressive scarring, the windpipe slowly narrows, severely

	restricting air flow. During an endoscopic surgery, doctors make three small incisions into the scar tissue. This opens the airway and restores breathing.
Voice of Vivien Williams	Because the issue will likely recur, patients like Jill are on medication afterwards to treat potential causes of the scarring and inflammation.
Eric Edell, M.D. Mayo Clinic Pulmonary Medicine	"We put everyone on aggressive anti reflux measures."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Plus inhaled steroids and an antibiotic. And if her airway does start to restrict again, Jill can have the surgery again – as many times as she needs it.
Jill Pottenger-Moe Has subglottic stenosis	"It's just so amazing to be able to breathe."
Voice of Vivien Williams	After seven years of struggling for air, Jill says she's loving life.
Jill Pottenger-Moe Has subglottic stenosis	"I can breathe, I can talk, I can walk, I can exercise, it's changed my life."
Voice of Vivien Williams	For Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Vivien Williams

Anchor tag:

Dr. Edell says after this initial treatment, about 40-percent of patients are still breathing easily after 2 years. Others may require additional treatment sooner. But the good news is that they can have the treatment as often as necessary.

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