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Finally: Freedom from Asthma

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Donna Claus was just 6 weeks old when doctors diagnosed her asthma. Until recently, it was a constant presence. She took asthma medication every day for 61 years. Shortness of breath hospitalized her countless times. "My first-grade report card said that I would do better in school if I didn't miss so much because of my asthma," Donna recalls.

Later, she became overweight and developed diabetes due to the steroids she took to help control her breathing. Her condition drained her

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Find a pulmonologist at Good Samaritan Hospital that offers Bronchial Thermoplasty.

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Donna Claus breathes easy even while walking her grandson.

strength so that all she could do was sit and watch TV. She's been to more doctors than she can remember.

Now, there's one doctor – and hospital – she is happy to remember.

Last year, Donna completed bronchial thermoplasty treatment with pulmonologist Rajesh Patel, MD, at Good Samaritan Hospital, where this innovative treatment was introduced to Greater Dayton.

After three treatments, Donna was back on her feet. She doesn't even carry an inhaler anymore. "I worked the hamburger stand at my church festival three days in a row without using my puffer once," Donna says.

Hear Donna in her own words.

Click play to watch the video or [read the transcript](#).

About Bronchial Thermoplasty

Patients treated with bronchial thermoplasty have been shown to have a decrease in severe asthma attacks and improved quality of life.

[Learn More](#)

Committed to Innovation

People with asthma have trouble breathing because inflammation causes the airway to swell and narrow.

Bronchial thermoplasty uses radiofrequency energy to heat the lung tissue in a controlled manner and reduce the thickness of smooth muscle in the airways. After treatment, the muscle is less able to constrict, so air can move in and out of the lungs more freely. Patients typically undergo three sessions, each targeting different areas of the lungs.

“I recommended bronchial thermoplasty for Donna because medications were not helping her, and because her asthma was affecting her quality of life so greatly,” Dr. Patel says. Adults with severe, persistent asthma may be candidates for the treatment if their condition is not well controlled by inhaled corticosteroids and long acting beta agonists.

For Donna, Dr. Patel used the Alair® Bronchial Thermoplasty System which was approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration in April 2010. He compares the outpatient procedure to a bronchoscopy, a test for viewing the airways and diagnosing lung disease.

While Donna’s case was his first with the new system, Dr. Patel has performed about 200 bronchoscopies a year for the past 20 years. Armed with that knowledge, and with Good Sam’s commitment to bringing the treatment to the Dayton area, Donna was convinced.



“I felt like I had to do it, because even if it didn’t work for *Dr. Rajesh Patel* me, those results could one day benefit others,” Donna says. And that’s important to her because she has children and grandchildren with asthma.

The results for Donna – and others – have been impressive. Studies show the procedure produced a one-third drop in severe asthma attacks, 84 percent fewer emergency visits and 73 percent fewer hospital stays. Treated patients also missed fewer days from work and school.

Active Once Again

“After the first treatment, I noticed a magnificent difference,” she says.
“After the third treatment, I sent my oxygen tank back. I put my handicap tag in my glove box, and it hasn’t come out since.”

Donna lists simple tasks – once off-limits to her – that she now does with ease: Driving to the store, cutting out a pattern for sewing, cooking. “It’s like a whole new life,” she says.

“Donna has improved so much since the procedure,” Dr. Patel says. He credits Good Samaritan with the foresight to bring this new treatment option to the region. “Good Sam was supportive in obtaining the equipment and allocating staff for this procedure.”

Donna regrets missing out on a lot due to her asthma. But she’s busy making up for lost time. She now walks the track with her grandson and goes swimming with her grandkids. “I just hope my old body can keep up with my new lungs,” she says.

This procedure is offered by many Good Samaritan pulmonologists. For information, contact your pulmonologist or call 1-877-GSH-WELL (1-877-474-9355) to locate one.

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