

TODD BARON: Hi. I'm Todd Baron. And I'm a Professor of Medicine in the Mayo Clinic in the division of gastroenterology and Hepatology. And I'd like to talk to you today about expandable stents within the gastrointestinal tract.

Expandable stents can be either metal or there is a plastic expandable stent that can be used in the esophagus. And what these devices do is they go into the esophagus, or occasionally in the stomach, the small intestine, or in the colon to open up blockages. Almost always used for cancerous blockages of, again, the esophagus, the stomach, or the duodenum, or the colon.

And the symptoms that would lead to someone needing something like this would be inability to swallow food or liquids from a cancer that is in the esophagus, inability for it to leave the stomach. So nausea, vomiting would be an indication to put it in the stomach or the small intestine. And then in the colon would be blockage of the colon.

Almost always it's cancerous blockages that we place these devices for. These are used as an alternative to surgical bypass or to other therapies to treat what I mentioned as the symptoms that would be associated with each of these. And in some cases, it will replace an operation. Other times it will be a bridge to an operation.

So the stent will go in. The blockage will be relieved. And then, perhaps, even surgery would be done later.

Now, for a benign disease or noncancerous blockage, where we use these is mostly in the esophagus. And that is for some reason some patients will develop scarring in the esophagus and have the symptoms where they can't swallow. And in this case, we'll put these stents in temporarily. So we will move them after approximately three to six months. But the idea is that when they're removed the esophagus will stay open. And it will keep the scarring process open.

So stents for benign disease in the esophagus really are only used when other methods to open the esophagus have failed. Those methods usually being dilation or stretching the esophagus. So with the use of these expandable stents we've been able to treat many patients who've had blockages throughout the gastrointestinal tract with very good results. Thank you.