

Irish Surgeon's Medical Advance Hailed

AN IRISH surgeon has developed a revolutionary method of treating a painful condition affecting thousands of people.

Dr. Patrick Leahy, who is based in Dublin's Blackrock Clinic, is in demand worldwide to teach other doctors his surgical techniques.

A pioneer in the field of keyhole or minimally invasive surgery – he specialises in operations which cause the least possible disruption or discomfort to the patient.

The new surgical development for the first time allows doctors to repair hiatus hernias without the patient undergoing major surgery.

People who suffer from hiatus hernias have great difficulty in eating and experience a lot of chest pain caused by reflux of acid.

The condition includes a narrowing of the oesophagus (the pipe leading to the stomach) and until recently required expensive and awkward drug treatments for life.

Sufferers were also obliged to sleep almost in a sitting position propped up by several pillows, to try to stop the reflux of acid. The condition can affect people



anywhere between the age of 25 and 65.

Doctors were until now reluctant to recommend surgery because the procedure involved a major operation.

But the new method allows doctors to operate through three tiny incisions in the abdomen, inserting a nylon prosthesis which repairs the hole and a sphincter which stops the acid from coming up.

"The benefits of the operation are tremendous because the patient can stop taking medical treatment and can leave hospital in one day," explained Dr. Leahy.

The procedure is now available at the Blackrock Clinic and costs around 750 pounds, including consultant and hospital charges.