

Globus Pharyngeus

Information for patients from the Head & Neck Directorate

What is it?

Globus is a feeling as if you have a lump in your throat, but there is no physical swallowing problem. The throat and mouth may feel dry and tight, the voice may become hoarse and swallowing may be more effortful.

What causes it?

This frequently experienced problem is often the result of tension or stress, and may be associated with acid reflux from the stomach (which increases the tone of the throat muscles).

What can be done about it ?

1. Drink plenty of cool fluids - around 2 litres (4 pints) per day is advisable.
2. Stretch the back of your throat by yawning. Do this as often as you can.
3. Avoid throat clearing this habit causes more tightness to occur in your throat, does **not** get rid of the lump sensation, and aggravates the edges of the vocal cords. If you feel that you have some mucus to clear from your throat, do not throat clear, but have a drink to wash it away, or do a silent huff and a strong gulp to clear it.
4. Look carefully at your lifestyle to see how you can introduce some more relaxation and time into it, just for you to unwind. Take up a relaxing hobby such as yoga, walking, meditation or tai chi. Allocate a specific time just for you to read, listen to music or do something creative. Be prepared to delegate work/responsibility to others. Look at symptoms and see when they become worse - is there a pattern of tension relating to a certain time of day/situation that you could address?
5. Try these specific exercises to stretch and relax the muscles of the head, neck and shoulders:
 - Sit tall and let your shoulders and arms hang comfortably
 - Don't let your head poke forwards or loll backwards
 - Lift your shoulders to your ears - hold them to the count of 6 then drop them, repeat 3 times
 - Look over your left shoulder - hold it, then in the mid-line, then look over your right shoulder. Repeat this sequence 3 times
 - Tilt your head down to your left shoulder, hold it for the count of 3, then tilt it to the right shoulder. Repeat this sequence 3 times.
 - Drop your head down onto your chest and **very** slowly and gently roll your head up to one shoulder, open your mouth as you roll it round to the other shoulder and slowly back down onto your chest. Hold this position for a few seconds, then slowly raise your head. Repeat this exercise going round in the other direction.



- Screw up your face and hands as tightly as you can - hold it for 6 seconds, then relax. Doing these exercises to slow quiet music is helpful.

6. Listen to a relaxation tape each night before you go to bed.

7. Take an antacid such as Gaviscon, which can be helpful to line and protect your throat against the effects of acid reflux. However, it is advisable to see your doctor if these symptoms persist.

A follow up appointment with the Speech & Language Therapist is recommended, to ensure guidelines are being followed. Most people find that by following the above advice their symptoms gradually fade and cease to be a problem; however, if after following the advice in this leaflet, symptoms persist please contact the Speech & Language Therapist or return to the ENT Department for further advice.