



## Globus Syndrome

### What is globus syndrome?

Globus syndrome is a common condition characterised by a sensation of a 'lump' or tightness in the throat. It is also known by similar names, including globus pharyngeus, globus pharyngis and globus sensation. It is classified as a *functional gastrointestinal disorder*, and while the symptoms are often bothersome it is not a dangerous condition.

### What causes globus syndrome?

The cause of globus syndrome is uncertain. It often coexists with other conditions such as reflux (gastro-oesophageal or laryngopharyngeal reflux), overactivity of the muscle at the upper end of the oesophagus (cricopharyngeal spasm), or muscle tension and anxiety disorders. Many ENT surgeons believe that globus syndrome is due to a combination of factors, with hyperactivity/hypersensitivity of the pharyngeal or oesophageal muscles most important.

### What symptoms can you have?

Symptoms vary from patient to patient, but most patients experience a fluctuating lower pharyngeal foreign body sensation that is usually intermittent, but can be persistent. For most patients it is worse between meals and has been present for many weeks or months before seeking medical attention. There can be irritation and throat clearing, but for most patients the condition is painless.

### How is a diagnosis made?

Diagnosis is usually clinical, meaning that an ENT surgeon will take a history and perform an examination. In most cases a visual examination of the larynx and pharynx, called flexible nasal endoscopy, is performed. Depending on their symptoms, some patients will require additional investigations such as a barium swallow, CT scan or gastroscopy.

### How is globus syndrome treated?

Treatment is usually conservative rather than surgical and is focused on removing exacerbating conditions such as reflux. Most patients will benefit from optimal vocal hygiene including avoidance of deliberate throat clearing, maintaining adequate hydration and reducing vocal strain. Reflux-related symptoms can also be managed by:

- Minimising large, spicy or acidic meals
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Reducing alcohol, tobacco and caffeine intake
- Elevating the head and throat above the level of the stomach when sleeping
- Avoiding eating 2 hours before sleep

### More information on globus syndrome:

More information on globus syndrome and other functional gastrointestinal disorders can be found at: <https://theromefoundation.org>