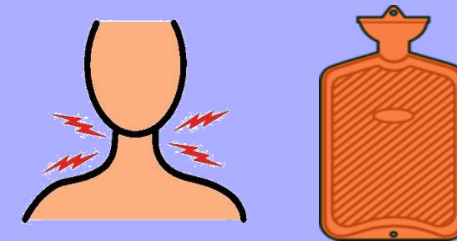


Community Adult
Speech & Language Therapy Team
910 The Crescent
Colchester Business Park
Colchester
Essex
CO4 9YQ

Community Gateway: 0300 0032 144



MANAGING REFLUX RELATED VOICE AND SWALLOWING PROBLEMS

Managing Reflux:

Successful management of reflux often involves a combination of medication and dietary/lifestyle changes.

MEDICATION:

Your GP or ENT will advise you of the best medication to manage your reflux. It will need to be taken every day without fail, exactly as prescribed.

Protein Pump Inhibitors:

('PPIs') (e.g. Lansoprazole, Omeprazole)

- Work by reducing the amount of stomach acid produced
- Must be taken 30 minutes before food, ideally twice daily, as they remain active for only 12 hours.
- PPIs only protect against acid; they do not prevent damage caused by bile or pepsin.

Alginate: Gaviscon Advance.

- A thick liquid, which coats the inside of the throat & oesophagus, protecting the tissues from damage caused by bile, pepsin and acid
- Forms a 'plug' on top of the stomach contents, reducing upward movement of these substances
- It is vital that this is taken AFTER meals, or as the last thing swallowed before bed. Taking food or drink after Gaviscon Advance will destroy its 'plugging' action.

Note: It can take several months for reflux symptoms to improve, and further time for the vocal tissues to repair. Always discuss with your doctor before starting, stopping or altering medication.



Reflux can cause one or more of the following symptoms:

- Hoarse, strained or tired voice ('dysphonia')
- Persistent or irritable cough
- Breathing difficulties or choking episodes, especially at night
- Sensation of a lump in the throat ('globus')
- Sensation of mucous in the throat or postnasal drip
- Throat-clearing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Bitter taste in the mouth and/or dry throat
- Bad breath and/or hoarse voice in the morning
- Heartburn, chest pain or sensation of acid coming up

Many people do not experience 'heartburn' symptoms, or taste acid coming up. This is called 'silent reflux'

Evidence suggests that only 3 reflux episodes per week are sufficient to cause the symptoms above.

Think of your stomach as a hot water bottle with no stopper, full of noxious substances.

Effective management typically aims to reduce the harmfulness of the contents, while trying to keep them safely inside the bottle!



Managing Reflux:

Subtle adjustments to your lifestyle and diet can significantly improve reflux, and may be sufficient to manage it completely in the long term.

DIET

The following foods/drinks are believed to worsen reflux:



- Fatty, fried or processed foods, (e.g. cheese, pastry, butter, 'fast' foods.)

- Acidic foods, (e.g. tomatoes, oranges, grapefruits, fruit juices.)



- Spicy food



- Alcohol, particularly white wine and spirits



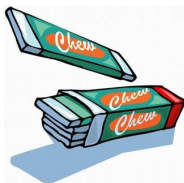
- Fizzy drinks



- Caffeine (coffee/tea/cola)

- Chocolate

These foods contribute either by increasing the amount of acid in the stomach contents, or by weakening the sphincter (valve) at the top of the stomach.



Chewing gum after meals may help, as it stimulates saliva production, which helps neutralise stomach acid. Tooth-whitening gum containing bicarbonate of soda can also have a neutralising effect. However some people find gum worsens reflux.

LIFESTYLE:



- **Quit smoking** (believed to worsen reflux by reducing saliva production, increasing stomach acid and weakening the valve at the top of the stomach). Ask about local Smoking Cessation services
- Try to **loose any excess weight** and **avoid tight clothing** around your middle to prevent pressure on the 'hot water bottle'. (this partly accounts for increased reflux/heartburn during pregnancy)
- **Raise the head of your bed** by around 6 inches by placing the legs on bricks or blocks—stomach contents will have to travel uphill to reach your throat.
- **If you sleep on your side, choose the left side.** Due to the position of the stomach, this will keep the 'bottle' more upright
- **Try not to eat within three hours of going to bed** or lying down (and take Gaviscon Advance if prescribed)
- Maintain an **upright posture** as much as possible and be cautious with activities which involve bending, or might jolt or squeeze the abdomen, like gardening, yoga, jogging, singing, lifting heavy objects or 'straining' (e.g. when using the toilet).
- Moderate these activities; avoid eating beforehand and consider use of Gaviscon Advance before beginning.

