Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Reflux

Version number: **1**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Reflux

Patient Information

Speech and Language Therapy Department

- Author ID: ZM
- Leaflet Ref: SL 019
- Version: 1
- Leaflet title: Reflux
- Date Produced: December 2025
- Expiry Date: December 2027

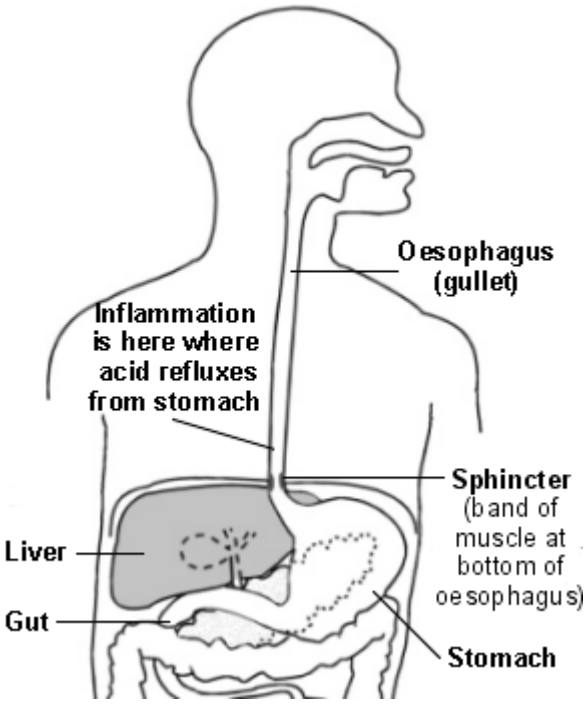
What is Gastro Oesophageal / Laryngopharyngeal Reflux?

This is when stomach acid (part of your digestive juices) can move upwards (reflux) into your oesophagus (food pipe). You may experience a burning sensation (heartburn) in the chest and up through the throat and neck.

Other symptoms may include:

- **Recurrent coughing**
- **Sore throats**
- **Hoarseness or change in the voice**
- **Constant throat clearing**
- **Excessive mucous**
- **A bad taste at the back of the mouth**
- **Sensation of a lump at the back of the throat**

These symptoms may indicate laryngopharyngeal reflux, which can irritate the vocal cords and cause voice changes.



What causes it?

The sphincter is a special band of muscle at the bottom of the food pipe (oesophagus), which should close tightly to prevent stomach acid moving up your food pipe. Sometimes people are born with a sphincter that is weak or doesn't function well and allows acid reflux to occur.

Other causes may be:

- Eating too much fatty and spicy food
- Wearing tight clothing
- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol

- Being overweight
- Pregnancy: reflux is very common due to pressure of the baby pushing up on the stomach and aiding reflux

What can I do to help?

Try the following strategies as they may help to alleviate the problem:

Posture

- Avoid clothing that fits tightly across the stomach
- Avoid slumping or bending after eating
- Try elevating the head of your bed 4-10 inches.

Antacids

Try an antacid such as Gaviscon Advance, which is available without prescription.

Check with the pharmacist to see which is most suitable for you.

Your GP may also be able to provide this on prescription so please discuss with them if you find it helpful.

Substances

Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol, as they increase acid reflux.

Certain medicines such as aspirin can increase acid reflux; (always consult your doctor before making any changes to medication).

Diet

- Avoid eating large meals
- Avoid eating for 2 hours before going to bed
- Eat smaller more frequent meals rather than three big meals
- Sit up straight when eating

Avoid foods and drinks that can cause reflux, including:

- Tea
- Carbonated drinks
- Spearmint
- Alcohol
- Tomato
- Coffee
- Chocolate
- Peppermint
- Spicy foods

- Citrus fruit



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