Globus Pharyngeus

Information for you
What is Globus Pharyngeus?
Globus Pharyngeus ("Globus") is the medical term for the sensation of a lump in the throat, where no true lump exists. This lump is felt in the adam’s apple region of the throat and varies in size from a small peanut to a large golf ball. It is often associated with a voice difficulty (Dysphonia). It is usually diagnosed after an examination of your throat by an Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) Doctor.

Signs and Symptoms
The main symptom is a sensation of something in the throat, which is often worse in the evenings. The sensation can disappear when swallowing food / liquid, but may become worse when trying to swallow saliva or pills. There is no associated weight loss. Another symptom is frequent throat clearing and feeling the need to swallow. There may also be a change in voice quality (e.g. hoarseness). Typically there are no abnormal findings on examination of the throat, although there may be signs of laryngeal swelling associated with reflux.

Where does the Globus sensation come from?
The exact cause of Globus Pharyngeus is uncertain, but it is thought to arise from incorrect muscle co-ordination or tension in the throat.
When we swallow, food goes through the oesophagus (food pipe) and into the stomach. The cricopharyngeal muscle acts like a sphincter (valve) around the lower oesophagus, preventing food going back into the mouth. If this muscle becomes too tight, it can cause a “lump in the throat” sensation and difficulty swallowing or speaking.

What triggers Globus?
There are many factors that may trigger or affect a Globus Sensation, including:

Stress / Anxiety: Nearly all people find their symptoms are worse when stressed, anxious or emotional. This is partly due to stress causing a general increase in muscle tension, but also because stress makes us more aware of any problem(s) / discomfort. When we are stressed, we also produce more chemicals and acids in the stomach which can cause reflux, making Globus symptoms worse.

Tiredness: Globus symptoms are often worse when we are tired for example, at the end of a day - especially if the day has involved a good deal of voice use.

Reflux: Many people with Globus have reflux of stomach acid into the oesophagus or throat. This doesn’t always cause symptoms, so you may be unaware of it. Reflux can cause inflammation of the larynx and increased muscle tension (including the
cricopharyngeus), so if you have concerns, try taking an antacid medication or speak to your GP.

**Voice strain:** Talking on the phone, singing, giving presentations, public speaking, shouting, speaking over background noise, or talking for long periods can lead to overuse or misuse of the voice and throat muscles, leading to laryngeal tension.

**Smoking:** Smoking can make Globus symptoms worse. It can cause an increase in stomach acid production and irritation of the throat, so try to cut down or stop altogether if you can.

**Post nasal drip:** This is an excess of mucus running down into the throat from the nose. This can make Globus worse and can irritate the lining of the throat.

**Certain Medicines:** Any medicines that dry out or irritate the throat can contribute to throat discomfort, increased irritation of the throat and worsening Globus symptoms.

**What can I do to help?**

Treatment addresses the underlying cause of the Globus symptoms and may consist of one or more of the following:

1. **Reassurance** – Many patients find that once their symptoms are acknowledged and explained, their symptoms starts to improve.
2. **Medicine** – This may include anti-reflux medicine, treatments for nasal allergy or post nasal drip. Medicine and advice can be provided by your GP or ENT Doctor.

3. **Voice Therapy** – This is like physiotherapy for the muscles of the throat and is provided by a Voice Specialist Speech & Language Therapist. If there is evidence of hoarseness (Functional Dysphonia), then exercises and advice from a Voice Therapist can not only help the voice problem, but can also help relieve the Globus sensation. A Voice Therapist may also give advice on general relaxation, anxiety management, posture and breathing.

4. **Vocal Hygiene Advice** – Vocal hygiene advice (Voice Care) is provided by a Voice Specialist Speech & Language Therapist. It involves understanding and identifying things that can affect your voice or throat. Sometimes simple advice such as drinking more water, or taking less caffeine (e.g. in tea, coffee, cola), can make a big difference to your Globus symptoms. If you have concerns about your voice or throat, please see your GP as soon as possible to discuss your concerns.
All of our publications are available in different languages, larger print, braille (English only), audio tape or another format of your choice.

Wszystkie nasze publikacje są dostępne w różnych językach, dużym drukiem, brajlem (tylko w wersji angielskiej), na taśmie dźwiękowej lub w innym formacie Twojego wyboru.

我們所有的印刷品均有不同語言版本、大字體版本、盲文（僅有英文）、錄音帶版本或你想要的另外形式供選擇。

Tha gach sgrìobhainn againn rim faotainn ann an diofar chànanan, clò nas motha, Braille (Beurla a-mhàin), teip claistinn no rìochd eile a tha sibh airson a thaghadh.

همارے सब प्रकाशन अनेक भाषाओं, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई, ब्रेल (केवल अंग्रेजी), सुनने वाली कैसेट या आपकी पसंदनुसार किसी अन्य फॉर्मेट (आस्प) में भी उपलब्ध हैं।

We tell you what you think...

If you would like to comment on any issues raised by this document, please complete this form and return it to: Communications Department, 28 Lister Street, University Hospital Crosshouse, Crosshouse KA2 0BB. You can also email us at: comms@aaaht.scot.nhs.uk. If you provide your contact details, we will acknowledge your comments and pass them to the appropriate departments for a response.

Name

Address

Comment

0800 169 1441

reviewed for plain English