

Useful Telephone Numbers

ENT Partnership

Surrey Clinic – 01252 852552

Frimley Park Hospital

Switchboard – 01276 604604

Parkside – 01276 604703

FI (Children's Ward) – 01276 604226

ENT Ward – 01276 604130

Clare Park Hospital

Switchboard – 01252 850216

Information for Patients on

Gastro- Oesophageal Reflux

The ENT Partnership – Surrey Clinic

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The ENT Consultants are

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Appointed to Frimley Park Hospital in 2003. Special interest in rhinology including rhinoplasty surgery and also voice problems.

David Jonathan FRCS.

Appointed to Frimley Park Hospital in 1991. Special interest in ear surgery, including implantable hearing aids. Involved in the regional training of ENT surgeons.

Andrew McCombe MD FRCS (ORL).

Appointed to Frimley Park Hospital in 1995. Special interest in head and neck surgery. Involved in the management of NHS services. Special interest in medicolegal work.

Medicines which Reduce Acid Reflux

Many preparations are available which reduce acid reflux and the symptoms you experience with it.

Available 'over the counter' at your chemists are antacids to neutralise acid in the stomach, Gaviscon which helps protect the lining of the stomach and gullet, and Zantac which reduces acid production. There are many other medicines available and the Pharmacist will be able to advise you appropriately, allowing for any other medicines you are taking.

If you take antacids or Gaviscon these will be best taken 30 to 45 minutes after eating and at night.

Other medicines are available only with a prescription from your Doctor and you may be prescribed these in the ENT clinic. It is important to try to follow the advice in this leaflet, in addition to taking any prescribed medicine.

Sources of additional information

The Surrey & Hampshire ENT Partnership
www.entpartnership.co.uk

British Association of Otorhinolaryngologists
www.entuk.org

Introduction

In some people, stomach acid may come up into the throat or gullet (oesophagus). This may occur at any time of day or night but is most common after meals and when lying down.

Some people do not experience any symptoms from such reflux of acid, while others may experience any of the following common symptoms, alone or in combination: a sensation of a lump in the throat, excessive catarrh/mucus, constant throat clearing, recurrent coughing, sore throat, hoarse voice, heartburn and indigestion.

The following instructions are recommended to reduce production of acid, prevent acid coming up into the gullet and throat, and neutralise stomach acid. You should progressively adopt enough of these recommendations to achieve relief from your symptoms. This process will take time as the irritated gullet and throat heals and you should allow at least four to six weeks of careful treatment before you can expect relief of your symptoms.

Weight and Posture

Obesity is a major factor in promoting reflux of acid. If you are overweight your symptoms will be helped if you can reduce your weight by careful dieting. You should avoid tight clothing across the stomach. Avoid slumping, bending or stooping as much as you can.

Acid reflux occurs more often at night, while lying flat, and causes irritation of the gullet and throat that continues to bother you during the day.

An easy way to reduce this, is to sleep on a bed which is raised slightly at the head end. To do this, use wood, bricks or even telephone directories under the legs of the bed to raise it by 4 to 10 inches. Pillows are unlikely to help since they generally elevate the head only. Acid reflux will occur less if you sleep on your right side or front rather than your back.

Diet

Avoid eating large meals. It is better to eat smaller more regular meals. Sit up straight during and for a period after eating. Take your evening meal at least two hours before going to bed and try not to eat anything else after this.

Certain foods may irritate the throat, gullet and stomach and stimulate acid production. These include caffeinated and de-caffeinated coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, alcohol, citrus drinks and fruit, and spicy foods. You may be aware of other foods that cause the same symptoms; avoid these too.

Smoking

Smoking stimulates stomach acid production and reflux, in addition to directly irritating the throat, and therefore if you are a smoker you should try to give up.

Medicines which Promote Acid Reflux

Some medicines may increase acid production and /or reduce the body's natural defence against stomach acid. These include Progesterone, Theophylline, anticholinergics, beta-blockers, Aspirin and 'Aspirin-like' non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as Brufen and Voltarol).

Do not stop taking any of your regular medications without discussing this first with your doctor.