

Globus (Globus Pharyngeus)

Globus is a persistent sensation of a lump in the throat where swallowing is normal. Investigation should include an examination of the throat to be assured that there is nothing else wrong.

Some people describe it as a frog in the throat, others as if the throat is tightly constricted. It is not serious and it is a surprisingly common problem. The sensation may be worse during or following periods of stress. This does not imply a psychiatric problem, rather that there may have been an accumulation of normal life stresses.

Sometimes the globus sensation is aggravated by acid indigestion in the throat (laryngopharyngeal reflux or LPR).

The following simple steps often alleviate the symptoms and commonly the problem disappears.

- If you experience regular acid indigestions discuss with your doctor taking an antacid such as Gaviscon.
- Stop clearing your throat. Many people get into a habit of clearing the throat to try to shift the discomfort. This actually aggravates the throat and will not help the globus sensation.

You can stop the habit of throat clearing in 3 or 4 days. Simply think just before you are about to clear the throat and then swallow or drink a sip of water instead. This might mean needing to carry a bottle of water with you wherever you go for a few days to a week. Throat clearing causes inflammation which causes more throat clearing, so breaking this vicious circle unwinds the problem.

If you still have a strong desire to clear the throat try to yawn or, if necessary, "huff" quietly.

If you stop throat clearing the throat will become more comfortable.

Regular, gentle neck and shoulder exercise help to reduce excessive tension in the muscles of the throat and therefore ease the globus. Try each of the following several times a day:-

- First, correct your posture, think tall. Imagine a string running up your spine and out of the top of your head, pulling you up to the ceiling. Your shoulders and arms should hang comfortable. Your head should sit easily on top of your spine - not poking forward or pulling back.
- (Sit or stand) Shrug your shoulders up to your ears, then release and notice that they are hanging and the neck is long. Repeat.
- (Sit or stand) Roll the shoulders in a circle, several times, then drop.
- Tip your head gently towards the right, so that your ear moves closer to the shoulder. Then tip it towards the left.
- Let your head drop onto your chest. Mouth Slightly open. Feel the stretch at the back of the neck. Gently and slowly roll the head in a circle. Repeat in the other direction.
- Relaxing the throat muscles. Try the following movements regularly, these should ease the globus:-

Swallow, with or without a sip of water when the throat feels uncomfortable.

Exaggerated chewing movements. Open your mouth at least two fingers wide between your front teeth. Move your jaw and tongue loosely up and down and around in an exaggerated chewing movement.

Learn to relax. If you think that you may be doing too much or are feeling a little stressed try to enjoy some relaxation. Either active relaxations such as swimming or walking, or learn a relaxation method such as yoga.

Drink enough. Some people find that their throat is excessively dry. If this is the case for you, you need to drink more fluids, i.e. water, diluted cordials. As many as 12 cups per day. Also, moving your tongue across your teeth increases salivation. Avoid too much tea, coffee and concentrated fruit juice.

If you follow this advice you should find that the globus sensation disappears. If you continue to be troubled by it, advice from the Speech and Language Therapist may help you.