

GLOBUS SENSATION: INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

What is Globus? Globus sensation is a feeling of something in the throat where we can't find anything wrong. It is a very real feeling – it is not something you “are making up”. You may feel it as a lump, a ledge, catarrh or simply an area of discomfort; different people have different ways of describing it.

Is it common? Yes this is very common.

What is the cause? The simple answer to this is we don't know! Acid coming up from the stomach may be responsible in some patients and if you suffer from heartburn or waterbrash (acid coming up into your mouth) it should be treated; unfortunately the throat feeling doesn't always respond to such treatment but your heartburn should. Stress does seem to play a part in globus sensation in about two thirds of patients, so often a change of lifestyle or relaxation exercises help. Many patients worry that their globus sensation is a sign of throat cancer and find that after they've been checked out at ENT they spontaneously get better.

Is there a cure? There is no specific treatment for globus sensation at present, although treatment of oesophageal reflux may help, if present. If you can, try to ignore it because the more you think about it, the worse it seems to get. Excessive swallowing or throat clearing simply irritates the throat making the sensation worse, and you can get into a vicious circle, so try to consciously stop yourself from doing this. If your globus is particularly bad, having a cold drink or sucking a sweet should help by keeping the throat moist.

Does having globus mean I'm likely to get throat cancer? NO!! In fact, most globus sufferers are non-smokers and are therefore very unlikely to get throat cancer.

Will it ever go away? Probably, but we know that a significant number of patients still have globus sensation two years after it started, so if your symptoms persist it does NOT mean that we have missed anything. However, it is rare for globus sensation to get worse over time, IF YOUR GLOBUS GETS WORSE PLEASE BOOK ANOTHER APPOINTMENT.

How is it investigated? The ENT doctor will typically examine your mouth/throat and pass a flexible fiberoptic endoscope to check your throat. They may suggest a barium-swallow x-ray for you or even an oesophageal endoscopy in severe cases.