Globus sensation

Feeling of a lump in the throat.

What is globus sensation

Globus is a feeling of a lump or tightness in the throat without food or drink actually sticking. It is common and usually harmless once the symptoms have been assessed.

People often describe it as:

- A lump or tightness in the throat.
- A sensation that doesn’t go away.
- The need to clear the throat repeatedly.
- Not painful and does not affect eating or drinking.

What causes it

Globus sensation may be linked to:

- Throat muscle tension.
- Stress or anxiety.
- Postnasal drip (mucus at the back of the throat).
- Acid reflux.
- Habitual throat clearing.

Sometimes, no clear cause is found.

Is it serious

Typical globus, with normal swallowing and no warning signs, is usually benign. A new throat symptom should not be assumed to be globus without an appropriate assessment.

It does not:

- Interfere with swallowing food or drink.
- Cause weight loss or severe pain.

See your doctor if you have:

- Painful swallowing.
- Difficulty swallowing food or drink.
- Weight loss.
- A hoarse voice or persistent cough.
- Coughing up blood.

Diagnosis

Your doctor will:

- Ask about your symptoms.
- Examine your throat and neck.
- Check for signs of reflux or muscle tension.

An ENT specialist may examine your throat with a flexible camera. Further investigations depend on the symptoms and findings; not everyone needs scans or a swallowing test.

Treatment options

- Reassurance – understanding the condition helps ease anxiety.

- Relaxation techniques – reduce muscle tension in the throat.
- Voice or speech therapy – especially if tension is a main factor.
- Treat reflux if your symptoms and assessment suggest it. Acid-suppressing medicine is not routinely helpful for isolated globus without reflux symptoms.
- Avoid throat clearing – sip water instead.

Self-help tips

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Avoid excessive throat clearing.
- Try gentle neck and shoulder stretches.
- If reflux affects you, avoid the foods or drinks that reliably trigger your symptoms rather than excluding foods unnecessarily.
- Manage stress – mindfulness or deep breathing may help.

What to expect

- The sensation usually improves with time.
- It may come and go, especially during stressful periods.
- Assessed, typical globus does not damage the throat. Report any change in symptoms.

When to see a doctor again

Arrange a review if symptoms persist, change or worry you. Seek prompt assessment for difficulty or pain swallowing, a neck lump, persistent hoarseness, unexplained weight loss or coughing up blood.

Get urgent help if you cannot swallow saliva or fluids. Call 999 for severe breathing difficulty.

About this information

This leaflet explains the condition and common treatment choices. Your care team will advise what is suitable for you. If you have an operation, follow the specific preparation and aftercare instructions provided by your hospital.

Further information

NHS inform globus

NHS Borders globus guidance