

Reflux Disease

Reflux disease is also known as “heartburn”, reflux oesophagitis, or indigestion and is due to normal stomach acid (and bile) regurgitating into the food pipe (oesophagus). Reflux is not caused by too much acid, but is due to acid in the wrong place (i.e. the oesophagus).

Symptoms include:

- Chest pain
- Burning behind the breast bone
- Acid/bile taste in the mouth
- Excessive saliva (“waterbrash”)

Other Symptoms include:

- Foul taste in mouth
- Hoarse voice
- Dry cough
- Wheeze (difficult to control asthma)
- Tingling of tongue
- Problem with enamel on teeth

Your doctor can usually diagnose reflux disease very accurately based on your symptoms.

Sometimes it is recommended that you have a gastroscopy (also called panendoscopy) to assess the degree of damage, diagnose a hiatus hernia (see “Hiatus Hernia”) and look for any complications (see Barrett’s Oesophagus” and “Peptic Oesophageal Stricture”).

There are extremely effective forms of treatment to control the symptoms of reflux.

Certain lifestyle changes (such as an earlier evening meal and elevation of the head of the bed) may also be required.