

UG20lite Anti-Reflux Surgery

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This document will give you information about anti-reflux surgery. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is acid reflux?

Acid reflux is a condition where acid from your stomach travels up into your oesophagus (gullet). This happens if the valve between your stomach and your oesophagus does not work effectively. Acid reflux can cause 'heartburn' or acid in the back of your mouth (see figure 1).

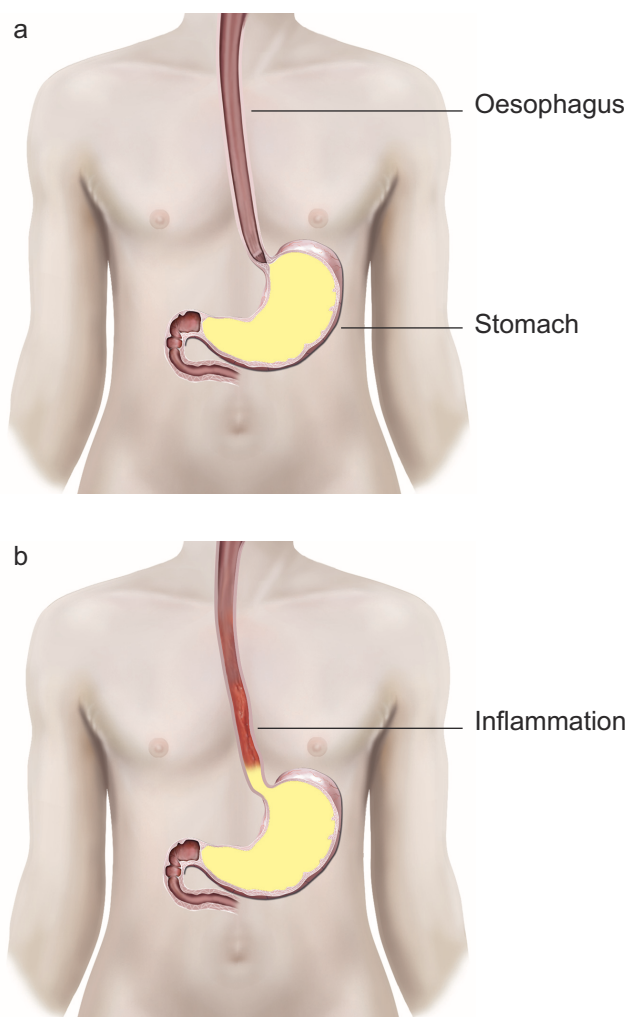


Figure 1

a A normal valve

b A faulty valve

What are the benefits of surgery?

You should get relief from the symptoms of acid reflux without needing to take medication.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Medication that lowers the acid content in your stomach is effective at controlling symptoms and healing inflammation.

Surgery is recommended only if the symptoms continue or if you would prefer to have an operation than take medication for the rest of your life.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes one to two hours. Your surgeon may use keyhole surgery. They will make several small cuts on your abdomen. Your surgeon will insert surgical instruments, along with a telescope, inside your abdomen and perform the operation.

Your surgeon will stitch your diaphragm to reduce the size of the hole your oesophagus passes through. They will wrap and stitch the top part of your stomach around your lower oesophagus.

Your surgeon can wrap your stomach all the way round your oesophagus or just part-way round.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Developing a hernia in the scar
- Blood clots

2 Specific complications

- Damage to structures such as your bowel, bladder or blood vessels
- Developing a hernia near one of the cuts
- Surgical emphysema
- Difficulty swallowing for a few months
- Pneumothorax
- Making a hole in your oesophagus or stomach
- Tear of the stitches used for the wrap
- Damage to your liver

Long-term problems

- Continued difficulty swallowing
- Incomplete control of reflux symptoms
- Tissues can join together in an abnormal way
- Weight loss
- Abdominal discomfort
- Diarrhoea

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home within a few days.

You should be able to return to work after three to four weeks, depending on how much surgery you need and your type of work.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

You should make a full recovery, with the symptoms of acid reflux gone or much improved.

Summary

Acid reflux can cause heartburn or acid in your mouth. The acid can cause the lining of your oesophagus to become inflamed or scarred. Surgery may be recommended if your symptoms continue while you are taking medication.

Acknowledgements

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