



Throat Irritation

Throat irritation is a very common problem with multiple causes. The generic term for this sensation is **globus** and is defined as the subjective sensation of something stuck in the throat. This is often accompanied by throat clearing or coughing. There may also be associated hoarseness, burning sensation in the throat, difficulty swallowing or pain with swallowing.

There are many factors which may trigger globus:

1. **Lesion/Tumors:** Although uncommon, tumors of the throat, tongue and larynx can cause these symptoms. This can be ruled out by a laryngoscopy or neck CT scan.
2. **Dryness of mucus membranes:** This may be a result of exercise, sleeping with your mouth open, breathing through your mouth, living in a dry environment or not drinking enough fluids. The American Urology Association recommends daily consumption of 66 ounces or 2 liters of water a day. (May be contraindicated if you have kidney problems.)
3. **Post-nasal drip:** This can be caused by sinus infections, nasal infections, allergies or other forms of rhinitis. A nasal endoscopy is done and a sinus CT scan may be ordered to further evaluate for these conditions.
4. **Acid reflux.** This may occur after meals which is usually obvious with foul tasting regurgitation, or may be "silent reflux" occurring at night when the esophageal sphincters relax (or they may not be closing as well as they should – such as with a hiatal hernia) and allow acid up into the throat. The lining of the esophagus and throat are different and you may not get heart-burn (because the esophagus can handle more reflux than the throat) but will get irritation of the lining of the throat. A swallow study or upper GI endoscopy may be ordered to further evaluate the esophagus.
5. **Ingested or inhaled irritants.** Ingested irritants (such as coffees, sodas and teas) or inhaled irritants (smoke, chemicals) can irritate your throat. A trial of avoidance will be recommended.
6. **Allergies:** Food and environmental allergies can increase mucus production within the nasal cavity and ultimately cause throat irritation. Allergy testing can be scheduled to rule out this as a cause.
7. **Other:** There are other, less common, causes including sensorineuropathies, infections, autoimmune conditions, etc. These can be further investigated with labs and/or trials of other medications if necessary.

Patient Instructions:

Initial treatment will start with the following list. You should do each of the following numbered items for two weeks. It will take some time for the lining of the throat to heal. Try not to change too many things at once so you know what is working and what is not working. You do not have to do the following things in the order listed.

1. Increase daily intake of water. Drink only water, no coffee, tea, soda or alcohol for 2 weeks. If your symptoms improve over the two weeks you can start to add things (coffee, soda, etc) back one at a time to identify the irritant.
2. Take 20mg Omeprazole twice a day. This is an over the counter medication. Take one tablet 30 minutes before breakfast and one 30 minutes before dinner.
3. Start Flonase nasal spray, saline irrigations and Cetirizine 10mg (Zyrtec) for two weeks. These medications are over the counter medications.
4. If no improvement, follow up in 2 months to discuss and review or proceed with further testing. If your symptoms resolve, you may cancel your follow up appointment; however, will you please let us know what you found as your irritant by emailing us at info@sdents.com.