

What is Barrett's Oesophagus?

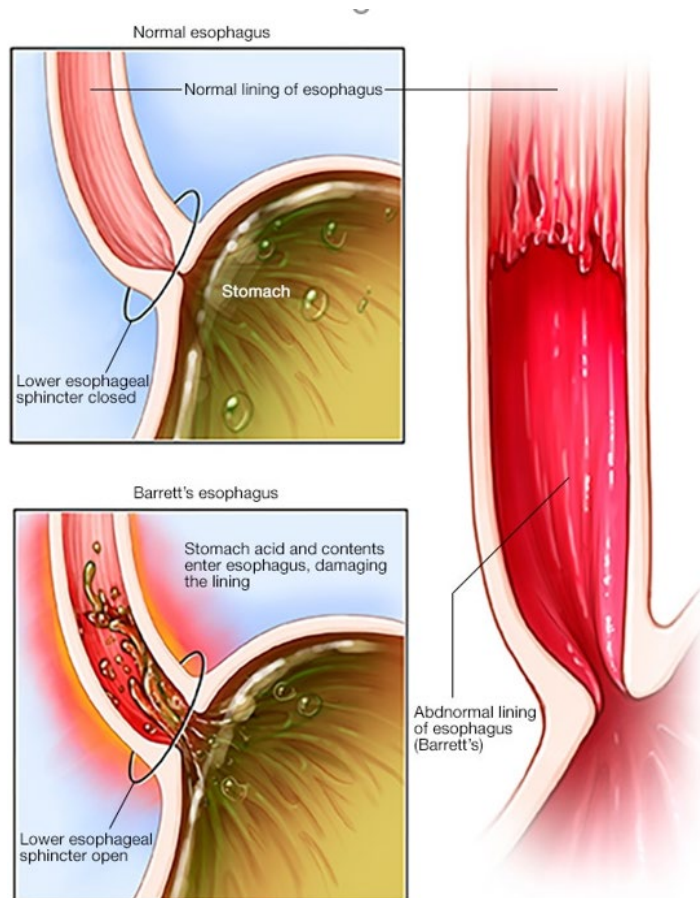
Barrett's Oesophagus refers to a change in the cells of the lower oesophagus. It is characterised by the replacement of the normal cells of the oesophagus by a different type of cells that are usually found in the stomach and intestine. This change in cells is due to long term exposure to reflux of gastric contents. Your Doctor may have taken a biopsy to assist with diagnosis.

Symptoms

The symptoms of Barrett's are the same as for GORD (Gastro-oesophageal Reflux Disease), and this is often a reason that people don't seek medical treatment until the condition is quite advanced.

The symptoms of Barrett's Oesophagus include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Frequent or ongoing heartburn
- Bloating or belching
- Acid taste in the mouth
- Painful or difficulty swallowing



Causes

People who have long-standing GORD have an increased risk of developing Barrett's. Therefore, early diagnosis and treatment of GORD is important to decrease the risk of developing Barrett's.

Risk factors include:

- Being overweight
- Smoking
- Aged over 50
- Family history
- Caucasian heritage
- Male gender

Treatment

Once diagnosed with Barrett's it is important that you follow the treatment plan that is given to you to help eliminate acid reflux. Without treatment the constant exposure to gastric juices the cellular changes have the potential to become cancerous. Precancerous cells may be treated with treatments such as radiofrequency ablation, where the cells are burnt away, but these treatments have risks and should to be discussed with your treating Doctor.

Regular monitoring may be recommended by your Doctor.

References

<https://gutfoundation.com.au/gord-hiatus-hernia-reflux-and-barretts-oesophagus/> accessed 14/3/22

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/barretts-oesophagus#bhc-content> accessed 14/03/22

<https://www.gastromedicine.com.au/barretts-oesophagus/> Accessed 14/03/22