



Barrett's Esophagus



Overview

This is a problem with the tube that connects your throat to your stomach. It's your "esophagus." With Barrett's esophagus, the lining of this tube becomes red and thick. This makes it hard for you to swallow food. It also raises your risk for cancer of the esophagus.

Causes

What causes Barrett's esophagus? Well, we don't always know. It's often linked to long-term acid reflux. That's when stomach acid pushes through the valve at the top of the stomach and travels up into the esophagus. It damages the lining of this tube. In some people, this causes a change in the cells that line the esophagus. They become more like the cells that line your intestines.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms? For many people, Barrett's esophagus doesn't cause symptoms. It can develop without you realizing it. If you do have symptoms, you can have things like heartburn, pain when you swallow and a feeling like something is stuck in your esophagus. You may have a sore throat that doesn't go away. You may have bad breath, and a sour taste in your mouth. You can also have symptoms like weight loss, vomiting and blood in your stool.

Treatment

How do we treat it? It depends on your symptoms and the condition of the cells that line your esophagus. Early on, we may want to watch and wait. You may need to change your eating and sleeping habits. If your condition is advanced, we may need to remove the abnormal tissue. You may benefit from surgery. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.

