Following your endoscopy today you have been found to have oesophagitis. This leaflet explains what oesophagitis is and gives you advice on the condition. You may have to have a repeat endoscopy in 4-6 weeks to ensure healing.

**What is oesophagitis?**

It means that the lining of the oesophagus has become irritated causing inflammation.

**Why does it occur?**

Oesophagitis occurs mainly due to acid leaking up (reflux) into the oesophagus (gullet). The gullet can cope with a certain amount of acid. The sphincter at the lower end of the gullet normally prevents acid reflux. When acid cannot be kept out of the gullet this is when oesophagitis happens. This is because the muscle ring at the lower end of the gullet no longer works properly as a valve.

**What are the symptoms?**

*Heartburn* is the main symptom. This is a burning sensation which rises from the upper abdomen or lower chest up towards the neck.

*Other common symptoms* that you may have experienced are:

- an acid taste in your mouth
- bloating
- belching
- pain on swallowing (especially hot liquids)

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**More uncommon symptoms include:**

- asthma type symptoms
- hoarseness
- a persistent cough, particularly at night

**Are there any complications from oesophagitis?**

If left untreated oesophagitis can cause further problems including:

- Stricture - if you have a severe or long standing inflammation it can cause scarring and narrowing (stricture) of the lower gullet.
- Barrett’s oesophagus - this condition is usually a result of long term reflux and with this condition the cells that line the gullet change.
- Cancer - your risk of developing cancer of the oesophagus is slightly increased.

*It has to be stressed that most people will not develop any of these complications.***

**What is the treatment for oesophagitis?**

A prescription will be provided by your GP for acid suppressing medication. They work by reducing the amount of acid that the stomach produces. It is important that you take this medication as instructed. Your symptoms will usually improve within a couple of weeks but continue to take the medication until we assess your response to treatment.

Depending on the severity of oesophagitis, the endoscopist will let you know if you have to attend for a repeat endoscopy in 4-6 weeks time.

This will allow us to assess your response to treatment and ensure healing.

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**What can you do to help with symptoms?**

Lifestyle changes may help to ease your symptoms. The following suggestions are commonly advised:

- Stopping smoking-the chemicals from cigarettes relax the valve at the lower end of the gullet and make acid reflux more likely. Symptoms may ease if you stop smoking.
- Avoid food and drink that make your symptoms worse.
- Some medications may make symptoms worse such as anti-inflammatory painkillers (such as ibuprofen or aspirin). Advise your GP or endoscopist if you suspect a prescribed medication is making your symptoms worse.
- Weight - if you are overweight it puts extra pressure on the stomach and encourages acid reflux. Losing weight may ease the symptoms.