

## Barrett's Oesophagus

This is a condition which affects the lower oesophagus.

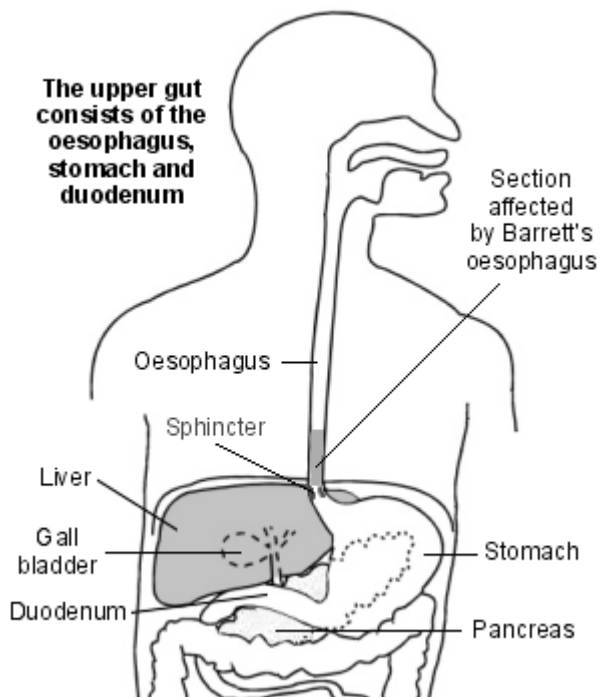
The cells that line the oesophagus in the affected area become changed from their usual structure to a different structure.

The changed cells are not cancerous, but they do have a low but increased risk of turning cancerous in time (about 1 or 2 per 100).

In most cases the cause of these changes is thought to be due to chronic acid reflux – causing irritation and inflammation, and eventual cell changes. Not all people with recurring acid reflux develop Barrett's Oesophagus (about 1 in 10 do).

When the clinician carries out a gastroscopy he/she will take biopsy samples of tissue from the lining of the oesophagus and stomach. The characteristic cells which indicate Barrett's will be identified if present. The clinician will also be able to visually note the different colour from pale pink/white to red indicating the possibility of Barrett's.

Treatment consists of taking acid-suppressing medication long term and surveillance gastroscopies at regular intervals to monitor the condition. If the cell structures change further (called dysplasia) it means the cell is now an abnormal cell. This is not cancer, but may be referred to as 'pre-cancerous' as cells with a high-grade dysplasia have a high risk of turning cancerous at some point in the future.



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