

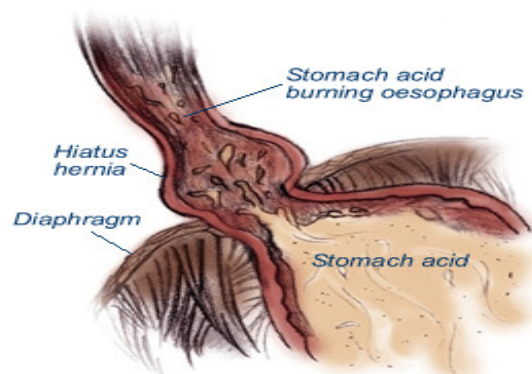
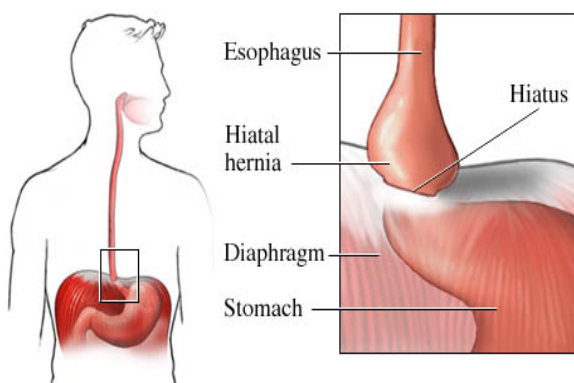
Community Endoscopy Service

Advice Sheet for Patients

Hiatus Hernia

- A hiatus hernia is caused by part of the stomach pushing up through a weakness in the diaphragm (the muscular sheet that lies underneath the lungs, separating the chest from the abdomen).
- In many people a hiatus hernia does not cause any symptoms and does not require any treatment or surgery.
- Hiatus hernia can lead to a backwards flow (reflux) of stomach contents or stomach acid into the oesophagus.
- Reflux causes heartburn, chest pain, water brash (a sudden filling of the mouth with saliva) and regurgitation. These symptoms are worse when lying down, bending or straining after a meal.
- Hiatus hernia can be diagnosed using a barium swallow or endoscopy of the upper digestive tract.
- Reflux may be treated with drugs to reduce and neutralise the acid in the stomach and to speed up the rate at which food is passed out of the stomach into the intestines.

Normally the muscular diaphragm is strong enough to prevent the stomach from pushing up above the diaphragm.



If the diaphragm becomes weakened the stomach can be pushed up through the diaphragm, leading to a 'reflux' of stomach contents back up the oesophagus.

Resources on the web

- <http://www.bupa.co.uk/individuals/health-information/directory/h/hiatus-hernia>
<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/Hiatus-Hernia.htm>