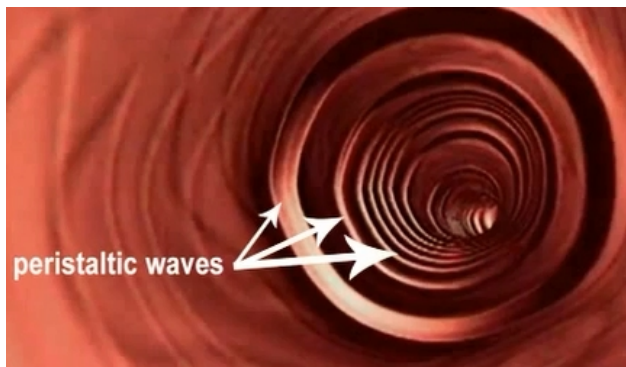


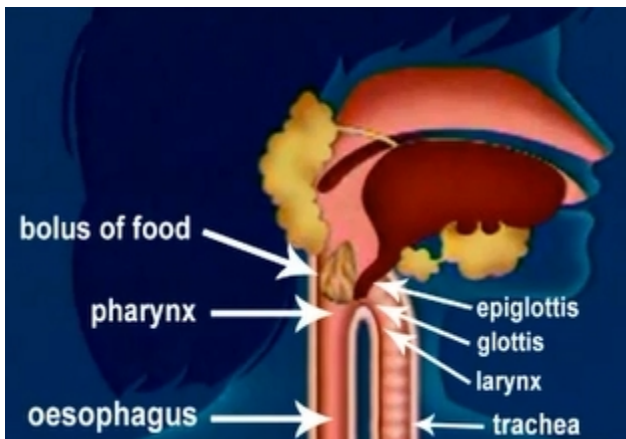
## Vomiting

### WHAT IS VOMITING?

When we vomit, some of the contents of the stomach are expelled by the mouth. This is a **defence mechanism** in case we swallow toxic substances. Vomiting can be manually triggered, but it is usually a reflex. This reflex first induces a feeling of nausea, or feeling sick, and then the stomach contents are expelled through an **anti-peristaltic movement**.



As mentioned previously, **peristaltic waves** are rhythmic contractions that help food move down through the digestive tract, but when we vomit, the contents of the stomach move up in the opposite direction, which is why we refer to an 'anti-peristaltic' movement.



When we swallow, the **epiglottis** turns down to block the **glottis**, which is the entrance to the larynx. There is a small leaf-shaped flap over the top of the glottis, hence the name epiglottis, from the Greek 'epi' meaning 'upon'.

When we throw up, a reflex closes the **glottis** to prevent the vomit from going into the **trachea** and then the lungs. Vomit typically contains food, along with bile and more rarely blood.

Vomiting is not the same as **regurgitation**, which is a passive action corresponding to the contents of the stomach coming back up towards the back of the throat or the oral cavity.

### WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

As with stomach aches, vomiting can be caused by various things. **Food poisoning** for example, or diseases of the digestive tract, such as a **stomach ulcer** or **gastroenteritis**, which is an inflammation of the wall of the digestive tract. Sometimes vomiting is related to balance functions inside the ear, such as motion sickness or vertigo. Side effects of certain **medication** may also trigger vomiting.

## 4.4.6 Vomiting

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Vomiting is the body's defence against...

- beneficial bacteria
- toxic substances
- raw food

---

Vomiting empties one of our organs of part of its contents. Which organ is it?

- The colon
- The stomach
- The lungs

---

Vomiting is generally...

- a reflection
- voluntary
- a reflex

---

How are the contents of the stomach ejected when we vomit?

- By a peristaltic motion
- By an anti-peristaltic motion
- By a compression motion

---

When we vomit, what stops liquid from entering the respiratory tract?

- The epiglottis
- The glottis
- The salivary glands

---

Regurgitating and vomiting are exactly the same phenomenon.

- False
- True

---

Regurgitation is when some of the contents of the stomach actively come back up to the back of the throat or into the buccal cavity.

- False
- True

---

Vomiting has many different causes.

- False
- True

---

Some medications may cause vomiting.

- False
- True

---

Illnesses of the digestive tract may cause vomiting.

- False
- True

## Answers

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Vomiting is the body's defence against...

- beneficial bacteria**  
*Wrong! That's not the right answer.*
- toxic substances**  
*Well done! Ingesting a toxic substance may trigger vomiting.*
- raw food**  
*Wrong! Try again!*

---

Vomiting empties one of our organs of part of its contents. Which organ is it?

- The colon**  
*Wrong! By the time food reaches your colon, the only way out is via your anus.*
- The stomach**  
*Well done! Vomited food comes from your stomach.*
- The lungs**  
*Wrong! Your lungs contain air.*

---

Vomiting is generally...

- a reflection**  
*Wrong! Try again!*
- voluntary**  
*Wrong! Although vomiting can sometimes be provoked, in most instances it is not.*
- a reflex**  
*Well done! Vomiting is a reflex action causing the contents of your stomach to be expelled.*

---

How are the contents of the stomach ejected when we vomit?

- By a peristaltic motion**  
*Wrong! This is what enables food to move through your digestive tract.*
- By an anti-peristaltic motion**  
*Well done! This is what enables the contents of your stomach to move up towards your mouth.*
- By a compression motion**  
*Wrong! That's not the right answer.*

---

When we vomit, what stops liquid from entering the respiratory tract?

- The epiglottis**  
*Well done! A reflex movement of your epiglottis closes your glottis to protect your respiratory tract.*
- The glottis**  
*Wrong! The glottis is the opening which needs to be closed.*
- The salivary glands**  
*Wrong! Your salivary glands produce saliva.*

---

Regurgitating and vomiting are exactly the same phenomenon.

- False**  
*Well done! They are two totally different phenomena.*
- True**  
*Wrong! Try again!*

---

Regurgitation is when some of the contents of the stomach actively come back up to the back of the throat or into the buccal cavity.

- False**  
*Well done! Unlike vomiting, regurgitating is a passive phenomenon.*
- True**  
*Wrong! That's not the right answer.*

---

Vomiting has many different causes.

- False**  
*Wrong! Try again!*
- True**  
*Well done! Vomiting may occur for many different reasons.*

---

Some medications may cause vomiting.

- False**  
*Wrong! Try again!*
- True**  
*Well done! Some medications may have side effects, such as vomiting.*

---

Illnesses of the digestive tract may cause vomiting.

- False**  
*Wrong! Try again!*
- True**  
*Well done! Vomiting may be caused by a stomach ulcer or by gastroenteritis.*