Guidance:

Managing Persistent Upper Gastrointestinal Symptoms During and After Treatment for Cancer

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Guidance: Managing Persistent Upper Gastrointestinal Symptoms During and After Treatment for Cancer

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Competing interests
None.

Abstract

Background
Guidance: The Practical Management of the Gastrointestinal Symptoms of Pelvic Radiation Disease† was published in 2014 for a multidisciplinary audience. Hard copies can be ordered free of charge from be.macmillan.org.uk, order code MAC15090. Following this, a companion guide to managing upper gastrointestinal (GI) consequences was developed.

Aims
The development and peer review of an algorithm which could be accessible to all types of clinician working with patients experiencing upper gastrointestinal symptoms following cancer treatment.

Methods
Experts who manage patients with upper GI symptoms were asked to review the guide, rating each section for agreement with the recommended measures and suggesting amendments if necessary. Specific comments were discussed and incorporated as appropriate, and this process was repeated for a second round of review.

Results
21 gastroenterologists, 11 upper GI surgeons, 9 specialist dietitians, 8 clinical nurse specialists, 5 clinical oncologists, 3 medical oncologists, and 4 others participated in the review. Consensus (defined prospectively as 60% or more panellists selecting 'strongly agree' or 'agree') was reached for all of the original 31 sections in the guide, with a median of 90%. 85% of panellists agreed that the guide was acceptable for publication or acceptable with minor revisions. 56 of the original 61 panellists participated in round two. 93% agreed it was acceptable for publication after the first revision. Further minor amendments were made in response to round two.

Conclusions
Feedback from the panel of experts developed the guide with improvement of occasional algorithmic steps, a more user-friendly layout, clearer timeframes for referral to other teams and addition of procedures to the appendix.

† Andreyev HJN, et al. *Guidance: the practical management of the gastrointestinal symptoms of pelvic radiation disease.* Frontline Gastroenterol 2015; 6:1 53-72

Contents

Introduction

This guide is designed for all clinicians who look after people who have been treated for upper gastro intestinal cancer. It is also designed for patients who are experiencing upper GI symptoms following any cancer treatment. Some of these will be doctors, others may be senior nurses, and increasingly, other allied health professionals.

Some lower GI symptoms are also included because these are common after treatment for upper GI cancers. However, for more detailed advice about managing lower GI symptoms please refer to the 'Guidance: The Practical Management of the Gastrointestinal Symptoms of Pelvic Radiation Disease'[1].

The GI consequences of chemotherapy, radiotherapy and resectional surgery are not that different. Historically, clinicians have associated specific clusters of symptoms with typical diagnoses especially in patients who have been treated for upper GI and hepatopancreatico-biliary cancer. Research increasingly suggests that specific symptoms are not reliable indicators of the underlying cause, hence, this algorithmic approach.

This guide defines best practice although not every investigation modality or treatment may be available in every hospital.

Those using the guide, especially if non-medically qualified, should identify a senior gastroenterologist or other appropriately qualified and experienced professional whom they can approach easily for advice if they are practicing in an unsupervised clinic.

Practitioners should not use this guide outside the scope of their competency and must identify from whom they will seek advice about abnormal test results which they do not fully understand before using the guide.

Specific therapies are usually not listed by name but as a "class" of potential drugs as different clinicians may have local constraints or preferences as to the medications available.

Arranging all first line suggested investigations required by the symptom(s) at the first consultation reduces follow-up and allows directed treatment at all causes for symptoms at the earliest opportunity.

Timely review of requested investigations is required so that further investigations can be requested if required. If worrying symptoms are elicited or potentially abnormal findings are present on clinical examination, then the order of investigations suggested in the algorithm may no longer be appropriate.

Practitioners seeing these patients are encouraged to consider providing patients with symptom questionnaires including nutritional screening questions to complete before or during the consultation as this may help improve the choice of investigations and identify when referral is required.

This guide has three parts:

1. An introduction, instructions how to use the algorithm, guide to blood tests and taking a history
2. An algorithm detailing the individual investigations and treatment of each of the 28 symptoms
3. Appendices with brief description of the diagnosis, treatment and management techniques.

Abbreviations used in the algorithm

5-HIAA	5-Hydroxyindole acetic acid
AXR	Abdominal X-ray
BAD	Bile acid diarrhoea
BAM	Bile acid malabsorption
CMV	Cytomegalovirus
CNS	Central nervous system
COPD	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
CRP	C-reactive protein
CT	Computed tomography
CTPA	Computed tomography pulmonary angiography
CXR	Chest X-ray
EBV	Epstein–Barr virus
ECG	Electrocardiography
ENT	Ear, nose and throat
EPI	Exocrine pancreatic insufficiency
ERCP	Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography
ESR	Erythrocyte sedimentation rate
FBC	Full blood count
FODMAP	Fermentable oligo-di-monosaccharides and polyols
GI	Gastrointestinal
GORD	Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease
GP	General practitioner
GTN	Glyceryl trinitrate
Hb	Haemoglobin
HSV	Herpes simplex virus
H2	Histamine receptor 2
IBD	Inflammatory bowel disease
ICP	Intracranial pressure
IgA	Immunoglobulin A
IgG	Immunoglobulin G
Igs	Immunoglobulins
INR	International normalised ratio
K	Potassium
LFTs	Liver function tests
MDT	Multidisciplinary team
Mg	Magnesium
MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
Na	Sodium
NET	Neuroendocrine tumour
NSAID	Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug
OGD	Upper GI endoscopy (oesophago-gastroduodenoscopy)
PO_4	Phosphate
PET	Positron emission tomography
PPI	Proton pump inhibitor
RBC	Red blood cell
SeHCAT	23-seleno-25-homotaurocholic acid
SI	Small intestine
SIBO	Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth
SLT	Speech and language therapy
SSRI	Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor
SST	Saliva stimulating tablet
TSH	Thyroid stimulating hormone
TTG	Tissue transglutaminase
U&E	Urea and electrolytes
US	Ultrasound
Vit	Vitamin

How to use the algorithm

1. Up to 28 symptoms have been described in this patient group.
2. Each symptom may have more than one contributing cause.
3. Symptoms must be investigated systematically otherwise causes will be missed.
4. Identify the symptoms by systematic history taking.
5. Examine the patient appropriately.
6. Use the algorithm to plan investigations.
7. Most patients have more than one symptom and investigations need to be requested for each symptom.
8. Usually all investigations are requested at the same time and the patient reviewed with all the results.
9. When investigations should be ordered sequentially, the algorithm indicates this by stating first line, second line, etc.
10. Treatment options are generally offered sequentially but clinical judgement should be used.

Guidelines for blood tests used within the guide

TABLE 1 Routine blood tests: responding to results

Routine blood tests include: full blood count, urea and electrolytes, liver function glucose, calcium	
Anaemic and symptomatic	- Consider blood transfusion (checking ferritin, transferrin saturation, RBC folate and Vit B12 before transfusion). - If iron deficient: consider iron supplements and coeliac screen, OGD, SI biopsy, colonoscopy and renal tract evaluation. If persistent, consider small bowel capsule endoscopy.
Anaemic but not symptomatic	- Check ferritin, transferrin saturation, RBC folate and Vit B12. Replace if necessary, monitor response. If unexplained consider coeliac screen, OGD, SI biopsy and colonoscopy and renal tract evaluation. - If anaemia is unexplained, refer to haematology and consider capsule endoscopy.
Abnormal urea, electrolytes	- Urine dipstix. - Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours. - Consider appropriate IV fluid therapy/oral replacement. - If K+ <3 or >6mmol/L **this is an emergency.** - If Na+ <120 or >150mmol/L **this is an emergency.**
Abnormal liver function tests (new onset)	- Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours. - Check thyroid function - Patient will need a liver ultrasound and liver screen including Hepatitis A, B, C and E serology, EBV and CMV, ferritin, alpha feta protein, alpha 1 antitrypsin, coeliac serology, liver auto-antibodies, total Igs, cholesterol, triglycerides, caeruloplasmin (<50 years old only).
Abnormal liver function tests (long standing)	- Refer for further evaluation to a hepatologist.
Abnormal glucose level	**If no history of diabetes:** - Between 7–11mmol/L: refer to GP. - >11mmol/L and ketones in urine: **this is an emergency.** - >11–20mmol and no ketones in urine: discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours. - >20mmol/L and no ketones in urine: **this is an emergency.** **If known diabetic:** - Do not check glucose levels. - Consider checking glycosylated haemoglobin.
Abnormal corrected calcium level	- If 2.6–2.9mmol/L: discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours. - If <1.8 or >3.0mmol/L: **this is an emergency.** - Check parathyroid hormone levels.

TABLE 2 Additional blood tests: responding to the results

Additional blood tests are indicated depending on the presenting GI symptoms and differential diagnoses as outlined in the algorithm.

They potentially include: ESR, CRP, red cell folate, iron studies, Vit B12, thyroid function test, coeliac serology (TTG IgA), magnesium, amylase.

Elevated ESR/CRP →	Consider the following possibilities: – Infection. – Inflammation (including IBD). – Recurrent malignancy. – Non-GI causes (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, vasculitis, connective tissue disorders).
RBC folate deficiency →	– Consider referral to dietitian for dietetic advice/supplementation. – Check coeliac screen.
Iron deficiency: ferritin, % transferrin saturation, red cell indices →	– If iron is low and iron saturation is low, discuss with supervising clinician and oncology team within two weeks. – If intolerant of oral iron: consider IV iron infusion.
If excess iron = raised ferritin with transferrin saturation>45% →	– Consider haemochromatosis: Discuss with supervising clinician and consider genetic testing.
Low Vit B12 →	– Exclude the possibility of inadequate dietary intake (especially vegans) – if this is the probable cause, consider trial of oral Vitamin B12 supplements. Dietetic referral. – Consider possibility of pernicious anaemia – check parietal cell and intrinsic factor antibodies. – Exclude SIBO (p. 64). Recheck result after treatment with antibiotics. – Check coeliac screen. – If confirmed on repeat testing and not treatable with oral replacement, e.g. after gastrectomy, ask GP to arrange lifelong intramuscular replacement. – Metformin therapy.
Abnormal thyroid function tests →	– If TSH suppressed (<0.5mIU/L), recheck result with thyroid auto antibodies. – If TSH suppression confirmed, request GP to organise/refer for radiological imaging and treatment.
→	– If TSH elevated (>4.0mIU/L). Recheck result. Also check 9am cortisol if Na ≤135mmol/L/K+ >4mmol/L or raised urea or creatinine. – If TSH elevation confirmed: Start thyroid replacement medication. Request GP monitor long-term. Review bowel function after 6–8 weeks.
Abnormal coeliac serology →	– If IgA deficient, request IgG coeliac screen. – If TTG elevated, confirm with SI biopsy. – Refer for dietetic advice once diagnosis confirmed. – Refer to coeliac clinic.

Serum Mg^{2}+	→	– If <0.3mmol/l **this is an emergency**. – Check K+ and Ca2+, if low, will also need replacement. – If 0.3–0.5, consider IV replacement if symptomatic or fall in Mg^{2}+ level has been acute. If oral replacement is given, check for response after 5–7 days with repeat blood tests. – If oral replacement is used, Mg Oxide or Mg aspartate provide better bio-availability and cause less diarrhoea than other Mg preparations. – If associated with refeeding syndrome, also monitor PO4 and K+ closely and give intravenous vitamin replacement.

TABLE 3 Specific blood tests: responding to the results

Specific tests are indicated depending on the symptoms/diagnosis as outlined in the algorithm. Fat soluble vitamins, trace elements, fasting gut hormones, INR, haematinics		
Any malabsorptive syndromes e.g. – BAM/BAD – Pancreatic insufficiency	→	– Check vitamin D2 and D3, trace elements (selenium, copper and zinc) and INR (for vitamin K). – If deficient: Start appropriate supplementation and re-check levels in three months – Request yearly monitoring via GP.
Short bowel syndrome	→	– Check vitamin D2 and D3, trace elements (selenium, copper and zinc) and INR. – Spot urine sodium. – If deficient: Start appropriate supplementation and re-check levels in three months – Request yearly monitoring via GP.
If bleeding	→	– Check full blood count and INR. – Discuss immediately with supervising clinician and gastroenterologist/GI surgeon/haematologist.
When on a bile acid sequestrant	→	– Check triglyceride levels annually. – Check vitamin D2 and D3 and INR (for Vit K) annually. – Check trace elements (selenium, zinc, copper) annually.
Cortisol level	→	– 9am level needed. If low, arrange synacthen test. If abnormal needs immediate discussion with endocrinologist.
Severe acute abdominal pain	→	– Amylase. If elevated **this is an emergency**.
Neuroendocrine tumour	→	– Urinary 5HIAA. – Chromogranin A+B.

Taking an appropriate history

Patients cannot be helped without an accurate history being taken.

- Taking a history of GI symptoms is a skill that must be learnt.
- Specialist units find that symptom questionnaires completed by the patient before the consultation often help clarify which issues are really troubling the patient.
- Take a broad approach: e.g. after treatment for upper GI cancer, patients also frequently develop troublesome lower GI symptoms.

Taking a history needs to elicit:

- What was gastrointestinal function like before the cancer emerged?
- How have the symptoms changed over time and how severe are they?
- If the patient has received multimodality treatment, how did symptoms change after each treatment component was delivered?
- Are key features indicative of potentially serious underlying pathology present, for example,
  - Rapid progressive worsening of symptoms?
  - Rapid weight loss?
  - Has the patient noticed any masses?
- Are there key features possibly indicative of reversible underlying pathology present, for example,
  - Sudden onset symptoms?
  - Nocturnal waking from the symptom?
  - Development of steatorrhoea?

Is there a consistent impact of a specific component of diet on their symptoms, especially:

  - Alcohol intake?
  - Are they eating/drinking too much at each sitting?
  - Are they eating erratically or regularly?
  - Fat?
  - Fibre: how much are they eating – too much/too little?
  - Gluten-containing foods?
  - Lactose-containing foods?
  - Sugar intake?
- Is there an association between the start of specific medication or increase in its dose and their symptoms – for example, metformin, lansoprazole, beta-blockers?
- Ask specifically about the presence of intermittent steatorrhoea (see p. 50). After upper GI cancer, this commonly indicates the development of:
  - Small intestine bacterial overgrowth.
  - Pancreatic insufficiency.
  - Severe bile acid malabsorption.

Upper GI symptoms

Appetite: poor/reduced *[anorexia]*

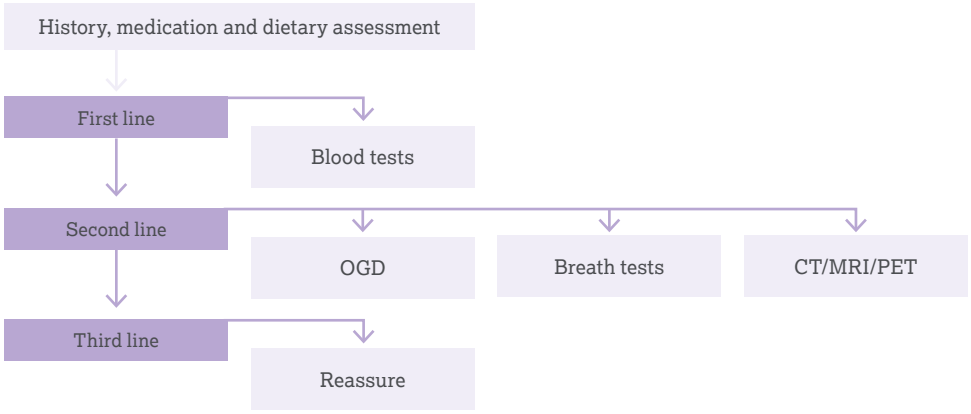

TABLE 4 Investigation and management of anorexia

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Weight loss/sweats/ fatigue	Routine and additional blood tests. CT chest, abdomen, pelvis. Refer for dietetic advice.
	Depression, sadness, anxiety	Refer for psychological support.
	Underlying eating disorder	Refer for psychiatric assessment.
	Pre-existing co-morbidities e.g. • Cardiac failure • COPD • Chronic kidney disease • Chronic liver disease	Refer for dietetic advice and appropriate GP/ specialist advice to optimise these conditions.
	Constipation	See management of constipation (p. 61).
Medication findings	Antibiotics e.g. Co-trimoxazole, Metronidazole Chemotherapy e.g. Cytarabine, Hydroxyurea Opioids Metformin NSAID	Discuss possible alternative medications and adequate anti-emetics whilst on treatment.
First line		
Routine & additional blood tests	Infection	Treat with antibiotics within level of confidence or discuss with microbiologist/supervising clinician within 24 hours.
	Endocrine dysfunction	Refer the patient to the GP or endocrinology team for further management.
	Other abnormalities	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Second line		
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57)	Inflammation (acid/bile)	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58).
	Gastric dysmotility	Consider prokinetic medication (p. 63). ± pyloric dilatation.
	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks. Refer for dietetic advice.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
CT/MRI/PET	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks. Refer for dietetic advice.
	Infection	Treat with antibiotics within level of confidence or discuss with microbiologist and supervising clinician immediately.
	Small bowel obstruction	If acute **this is an emergency.** Discuss immediately with a GI surgeon. If sub-acute/chronic discuss immediately with supervising clinician.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Belching/burping *[eructation]*

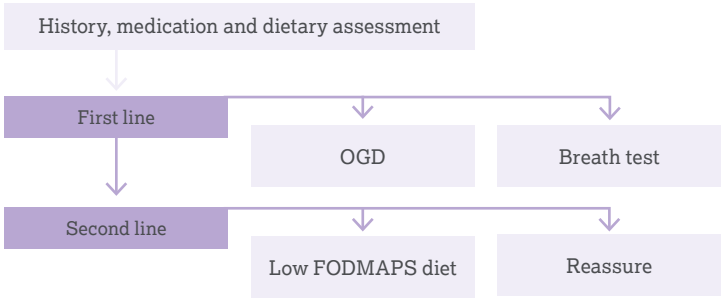

TABLE 5 Investigation and management of belching/burping

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Aerophagia (excessive swallowing of air)	Eat slowly. Reduce chewing gum and temperature of hot drinks.
		Assess for carbohydrate malabsorption (p. 60). Psychological support.
Medication findings	Use of effervescent medications	Discuss alternatives available.
	Sedatives, e.g. temazepam	Discuss alternatives available.
	Metformin	Change to long acting preparation.
Dietary findings	Excessive use of carbonated drinks	Advice regarding reducing carbonated drinks intake.
	Eating/drinking too much in one sitting	Eat/drink little and often.
First line		
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57)	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
	Stricture formation	Dilatation of anastomosis (p. 56) ± dilatation of pylorus (if evidence of delayed gastric emptying) with careful biopsy.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Second line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		• Refer to dietitian for trial of low FODMAPs diet. • Reassure.

Bloating

An uncomfortable feeling that the abdomen is full or distended or visibly swells.

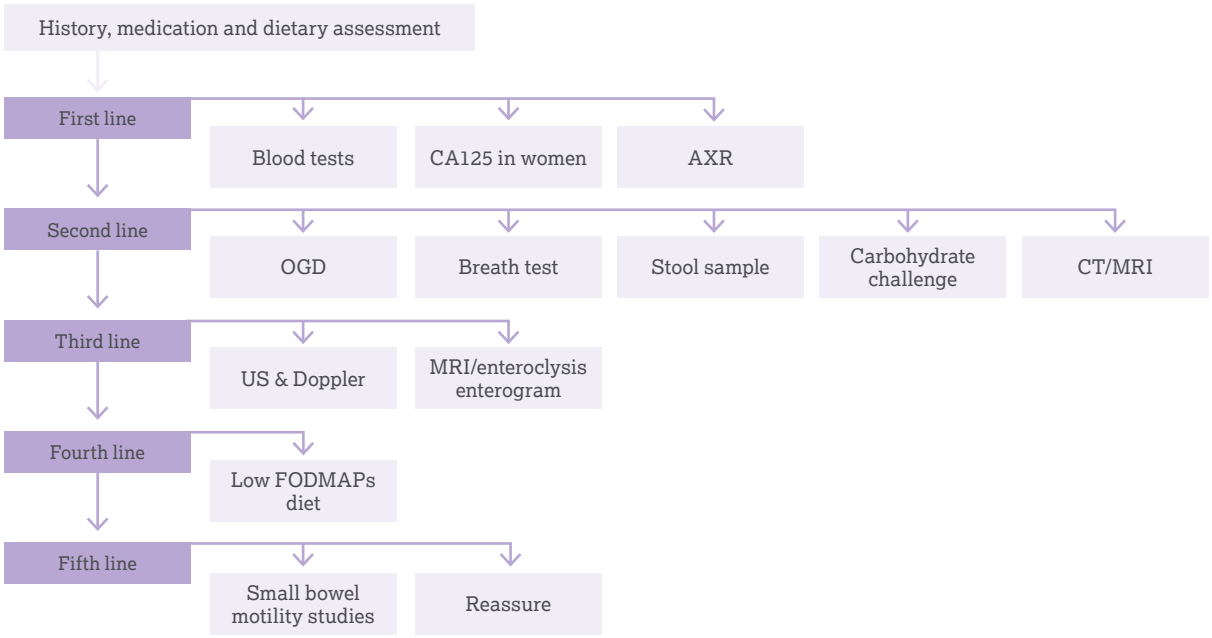

TABLE 6 Investigation and management of bloating

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Constipation	See management of constipation (p. 61).
	Dumping syndrome	See (p. 45, postprandial symptoms).
Medication findings	Opioids Metformin Statins NSAIDs	Consider stopping or alternative medications.
Dietary findings	Eating/drinking too much in one sitting. Inadequate/excessive fluid or fibre intake Excessive sorbitol Excessive caffeine	1. Dietary advice. 2. Referral to a dietitian with a seven day food diary.
First line		
Routine & additional blood tests	Abnormal results	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
In women, also check CA125	Raised	Refer to gynaecology requesting an appointment within two weeks.
AXR	Faecal loading	See management of constipation (p. 61).
	Ileus/obstruction	**This is an emergency.** Discuss immediately with GI surgeon and arrange urgent CT scan.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
	• Bone fracture • Gall stones • Air in biliary tree • Pleural effusion	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
Second line		
OGD and SI aspirate and SI biopsies (p. 57)	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
	Inadequate gastric emptying	Prokinetics (p. 63). Consider formal gastric emptying studies.
	Coeliac disease	Refer to coeliac clinic/dietitians/gastroenterology.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Stool sample for faecal elastase	EPI	Management of EPI (p. 62).
Carbohydrate challenge	Carbohydrate intolerance/ malabsorption	Management of carbohydrate malabsorption (p. 60).
CT/MRI abdomen and pelvis	Intra-abdominal pathology e.g. ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Third line		
US biliary tree and Doppler	Suggestive of gallstones, tumour recurrence	Discuss with supervising clinician and refer as clinically appropriate to a GI surgeon/gastroenterologist/oncology team.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
MRI small bowel/ enteroclysis/ enterogram	Small bowel disease	Discuss with supervising clinician and refer as clinically appropriate to a GI surgeon/gastroenterologist/oncology team.
Fourth line		
If normal investigations		Refer to dietitian for a trial of low FODMAPs diet.
Fifth line		
If no response to intervention		• Referral for gastroenterology for small bowel motility studies. • Reassure.

Borborygmi

Rumbling/gurgling noises in the abdomen.

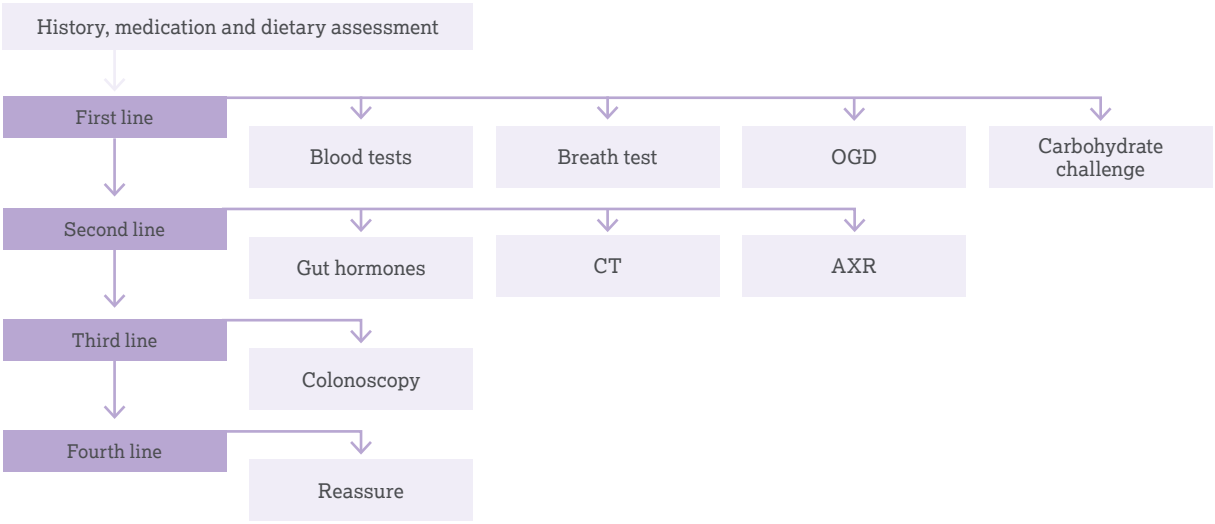

TABLE 7 Investigation and managemnt of borborgmi

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	• Faecal loading • Obstruction	Plain AXR.
	Mass	CT scan.
	Fibre excess/inadequacy	Refer for dietetic advice.
First line		
Routine & additional blood tests	Abnormal results	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57) and biopsies	Enteric infection	Treat as recommended by microbiologist.
	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
	Coeliac disease	Refer to coeliac clinic/dietitians/gastroenterology.
Carbohydrate challenge	Carbohydrate malabsorption	Management of carbohydrate malabsorption (p. 60).
Second line, if borborygmi are present in combination with other symptoms: flushing, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, wheezing, tachycardia or fluctuations in BP		
Fasting gut hormones Chromogranin A+B Urinary 5-HIAA CT chest, abdomen, pelvis	Functioning NET e.g. carcinoid syndrome or pancreatic NET	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate neuroendocrine MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Plain AXR	Ileus/obstruction	**This is an emergency.** Discuss immediately with GI surgeon and arrange urgent CT scan.
	Faecal loading	See management of constipation (p. 61).

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Third line		
Colonoscopy	Inflammatory bowel disease	Send stool culture. If mild or moderate, refer urgently to gastroenterology. If severe, **this is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with a gastroenterologist.
Fourth line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Change in sense of smell *[hyposmia, anosmia or parosmia]*

The reduced ability, inability or distortion of sensation of odour.

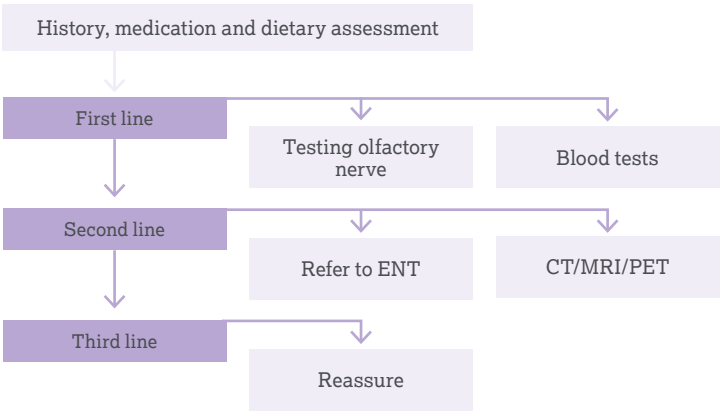

TABLE 8 Investigation and management of change in smell

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
Medication findings	Chemotherapy related Opioid related	1. Reassure. 2. Consider alternative medications. 3. Consider referral to psychological medicine. 4. Inform of charity Fifth Sense[2].
First line		
Testing of the olfactory nerve	Neurological defect	Refer to neurology team.
	Olfactory hallucinations	1. Consider neurological referral. 2. Consider referral to psychological medicine.
Blood test for zinc & Vit B12	Deficient	Arrange replacement.
Second line		
Refer to ENT	e.g. nasal polyps, sinus infection	
CT/MRI head/PET	Base of skull disease	Refer to the appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Change in sense of taste *[hypogeusia, ageusia or dysgeusia]*

The reduced ability, inability or distortion of sensation of taste.

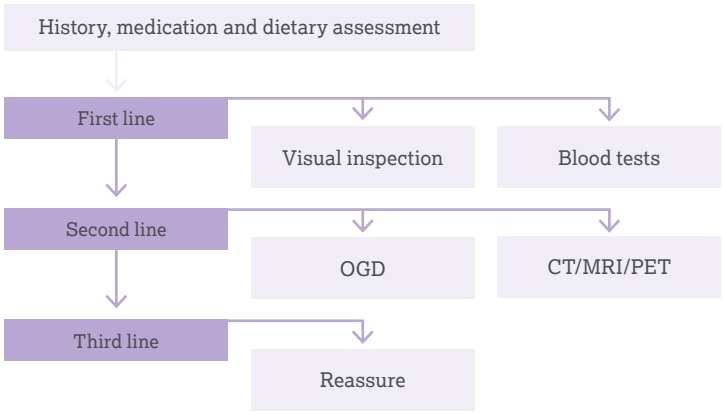

TABLE 9 Investigation and management of change in taste

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Smoking	Smoking cessation advice.
Medication findings (see p. 65)	Chemotherapy/ radiotherapy induced	1. Consider stopping or alternative medications. 2. Inform of charity Fifth Sense[2].
	Medication induced	Discuss alternative options available.
Dietary findings	Nutritional compromise	Refer for dietetic advice.
First line		
Visual inspection of mouth	Oral candidiasis	Antifungal therapy.
	Dental problems/ poor oral hygiene	Refer to dentist/oral hygienist.
Blood test for Vit B12, zinc, & selenium	Deficient	Arrange replacement.
Second line		
OGD	GORD	Start PPI or H2 antagonist. If following oesophagectomy, consider promotility agents (see p. 63).
	Candidiasis	Antifungal therapy.
If rapid/progressive unexplained changes, then CT/MRI head/ PET	Base of skull disease	Refer to the appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Third line		
If no response to intervention		Reassure.

Chronic cough *[tussis] lasting longer than three weeks*

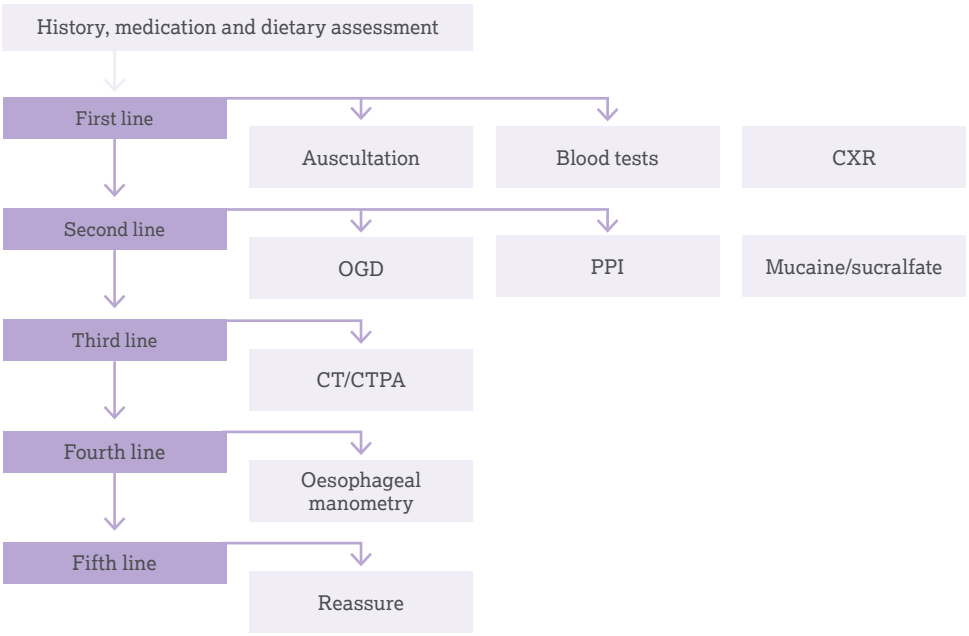

TABLE 10 Investigation and management of chronic cough

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	After food	Follow guideline for dysphagia (p. 28–31).
	Allergic rhinitis	Refer the patient to GP for further management.
	Smoking	Advise smoking cessation.
	COPD	Refer the patient to the GP for further management.
	Obstructive sleep apnoea	Refer the patient to GP for further management.
	Upper airway conditions: • Chronic tonsil enlargement • Irritation external meatus • Laryngeal problems	Refer to ENT.
	Cough with excess secretions in pharynx or globus	OGD, look specifically for inlet patch. SLT assessment including a contrast swallow.
Medication findings	ACE inhibitors	Reassure patient and suggest discussing possible alternatives with GP or cardiology team.
First line		
Auscultation chest & heart	Cardiac conditions e.g. left ventricular failure, tachycardia	Discuss immediately with supervising clinician.
	Respiratory conditions:	
	Aspiration	• Nil by mouth. • SLT assessment. • Alternative feeding.
	Other respiratory causes	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
Routine & additional blood tests	Abnormal results	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
CXR	Cardiac causes:	
	• Left ventricular failure	Refer to GP/cardiology/acute medicine.
	• Thoracic aortic aneurysm	Refer to cardiothoracic surgery.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Aspiration	• Nil by mouth. • SLT assessment. • Alternative feeding.
	Radiation pneumonitis	Refer to respiratory physician.
	Pulmonary embolism	**This is an emergency**. Contact the on-call medical team.
	Other respiratory causes	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
Second line		
OGD	Vocal cord abnormality, e.g. polyp	Refer to ENT.
	GORD	Start PPI or H2 antagonist. If following oesophagectomy, consider promotility agents (see p. 63).
	Anastomotic stricture ±pyloric stenosis	Consider dilatation (p. 56) with careful biopsy only after agreement from the appropriate MDT.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Cervical inlet patch	Treat with PPI or ablation.
Trial of PPI	GORD	Consider GORD.
Trial of mucaine/ sucralfate	Bile reflux	Consider prokinetics (p. 63).
Third line		
CT chest/CTPA	Pulmonary embolism	**This is an emergency**. Contact the on-call medical team.
	Cardiac causes: • Left ventricular failure	Refer to GP/cardiology/acute medicine.
	• Thoracic aortic aneurysm	Refer to cardiothoracic surgery.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Other respiratory causes	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
Fourth line		
Oseophageal manometry/pH/ impedance studies	Spasm	1. Start PPI or H2 antagonist. 2. Calcium antagonist. 3. Low dose antidepressant e.g. citalopram. 4. Refer to gastroenterology.
	Scleroderma	1. Start PPI or H2 antagonist. 2. Refer to rheumatology.
Fifth line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Diarrhoea

Stool type 6–7 on the Bristol stool chart[3]. Not increased frequency of type 1–5.

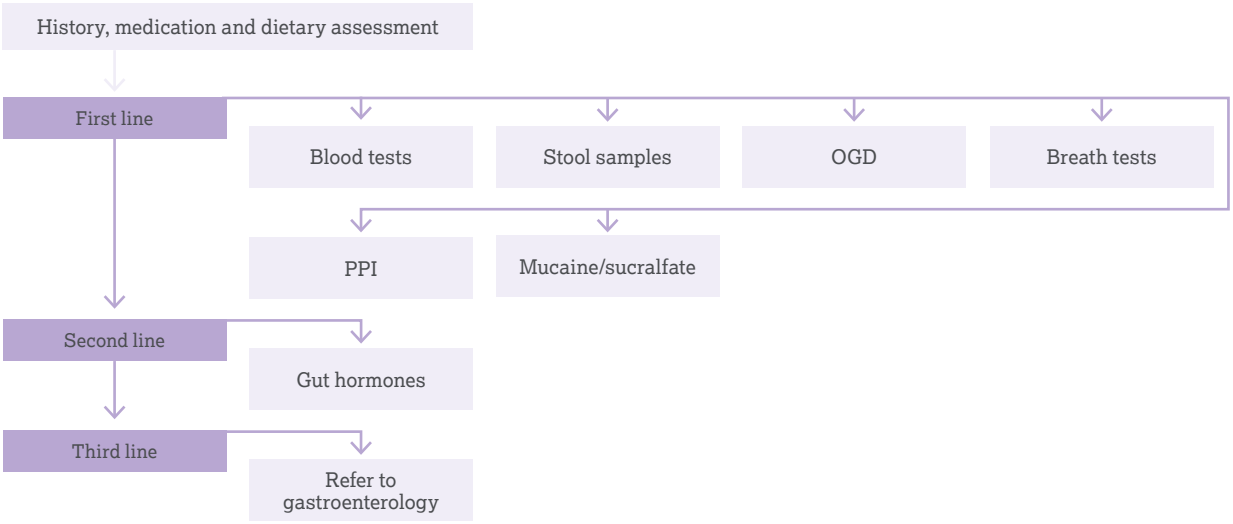

TABLE 11 Investigation and management of diarrhoea

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Smoking	Lifestyle advice about smoking cessation.
	Anxiety	Consider referral for psychological support.
	Dumping syndrome	See p. 45.
Medication findings	Drug induced: e.g. • PPIs • Laxatives • Beta blockers • Metformin	Medications advice.
Dietary findings	Low/high fibre intake High fizzy drink intake High use of sorbitol containing chewing gum or sweets High caffeine intake High alcohol intake	1. Dietary advice about healthy fibre and dietary fat intake. 2. Referral to dietitian and ask patient to complete seven day dietary diary beforehand. 3. Lifestyle advice about smoking cessation and alcohol/ caffeine reduction.
First line		
Routine and additional blood tests	Abnormal results	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
	Mg^{2+} low	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
	Coeliac disease	Refer to coeliac clinic/dietitians/gastroenterology.
Stool sample for microscopy, culture and C. difficile toxin	Stool contains pathogens	Treat as recommended by the microbiologist and local protocols.
Stool sample for faecal elastase	EPI	Management of EPI (p. 62).

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57) and SI biopsies	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
	Coeliac disease	Refer to coeliac clinic/dietitians/gastroenterology.
	Giardiasis	Metronidazole.
	Other GI pathology	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Carbohydrate challenge	Carbohydrate intolerance/ malabsorption	Management of carbohydrate malabsorption (p. 60).
SeHCAT scan	BAM/BAD	Management of BAM/BAD (p. 58).
Colonoscopy with biopsies (if frail, consider flexible sigmoidoscopy instead of colonoscopy)	Macroscopic colitis	Send stool culture. If mild or moderate, refer urgently to gastroenterology. If severe, **this is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with a gastroenterologist.
	Microscopic colitis	Refer to gastroenterology.
	Malignancy	Refer urgently to the appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Second line		
Gut hormones	Functioning NET	Refer to the appropriate neuroendocrine tumour team requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Refer to gastroenterology.

Dry mouth *[xerostomia]*

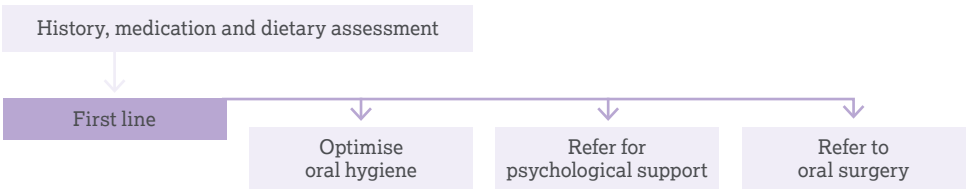

TABLE 12 Investigation and management of dry mouth

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Cancer related: Tumour infiltration Paraneoplastic syndrome Cancer treatment related: Irradiation to the head and neck/salivary glands Iodine-131 Surgery Chemotherapy Biological treatment (interleukin-2) Graft versus host disease	**General advice** Oral hygiene: refer to dentist/oral hygienist. Use fluoridated toothpaste – all dentate patients should use toothpaste with at least 1000 ppm fluoride, while dentate patients with radiation-induced salivary gland dysfunction should use specialist toothpaste with 5000 ppm fluoride. Limit acidic and sugary drinks/foods/medication and rinse mouth after these products. **Symptomatic management** 1. Consider saliva substitutes, e.g. artificial saliva spray or lozenges (mucin based) or a non-porcine alternative, if required for cultural reasons. Note: Glandosane® spray, Salivix® pastilles and SST® tablets are acidic products and may demineralise tooth enamel. 2. Consider mechanical salivary stimulants: • Sugarless chewing gum/mints • Pilocarpine 5mg tds in patients treated with radiotherapy to the head and neck • Consider referral for acupuncture .
	Oral infection	Treat accordingly to local guidelines.
	Inadequate fluid intake/ dehydration	Encourage oral fluid intake and oral hygiene.
	Decreased mastication (liquid/soft diet)	Refer for dietetic assessment and advice. Refer to speech and language therapist.
	Diabetes mellitus[6]	Refer to GP.
	Sjögren's syndrome	Refer to rheumatology team.
Medication findings[4]	Antidepressants: • SSRI's • Tricyclic antidepressants Ace inhibitors Antiemetics Antihypertensives Antimuscarinics Antipsychotics Calcium antagonists Opioids	Many other medications can cause dry mouth. Check if any doubt at electronic Medicines Compendium[7] (p. 65).
First line		
If no improvement	Psychological issues	Refer for psychological support.
	Missed organic cause	Refer to oral surgery.

Dumping

For dumping, please refer to the section "Postprandial dizziness/sweating/palpitations" on p. 45.

Dysphagia – high *[oro-pharyngeal dysphagia]*

Difficulty with swallowing/sensation of food sticking.

TABLE 13

Swallowing score	
Grade 0	Normal eating
Grade 1	Difficulty swallowing solids
Grade 2	Difficulty swallowing semi solids
Grade 3	Difficulty swallowing liquids
Grade 4	Unable to swallow solids or liquids

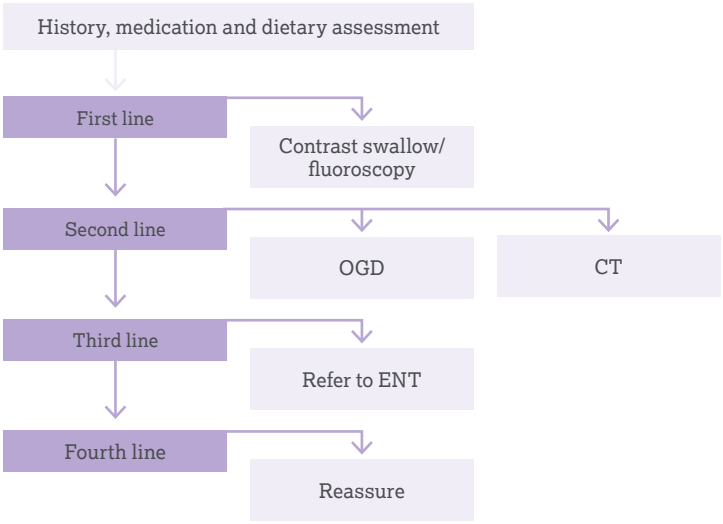

TABLE 14 Investigation and management of high dysphagia

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Dysphagia present	Refer for dietetic support. Refer for SLT assessment
	Neurological findings	Refer to neurology.
Medication findings	Bisphosphonates NSAID Potassium supplements Tetracyclines Theophyllines	Discuss possible alternative medications.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
First line		
Contrast swallow/ fluoroscopy	Fistula with aspiration	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with thoracic surgery.
	Stricture, if < 6 months after upper GI surgery	OGD ± dilatation (p. 56).
	Stricture, if after radiotherapy or > 6 months after upper GI surgery	OGD with careful biopsy and consider treatment for acid/bile reflux (p. 58). CT ± PET scan. Then review in MDT before any further treatment/ dilatation (p. 56).
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Inflammation (acid/bile)	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58).
	Pharyngeal dysfunction	SLT assessment.
	Local infection (viral/fungal)	Treat infection appropriately.
Second line		
OGD under GA (no endoscopic intervention until discussed at the MDT)	Inflammation (acid/bile)	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58).
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Vocal cord palsy	CT scan and refer to cancer MDT within two weeks. Referral to SLT.
CT chest	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Third line		
Referral to ENT	Head and neck pathology	ENT Team Management.
Fourth line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Dysphagia – low *[oesophageal dysphagia]*

Difficulty with swallowing/sensation of food sticking.

TABLE 15

Swallowing score	
Grade 0	Normal eating
Grade 1	Difficulty swallowing solids
Grade 2	Difficulty swallowing semi solids
Grade 3	Difficulty swallowing liquids
Grade 4	Unable to swallow solids or liquids

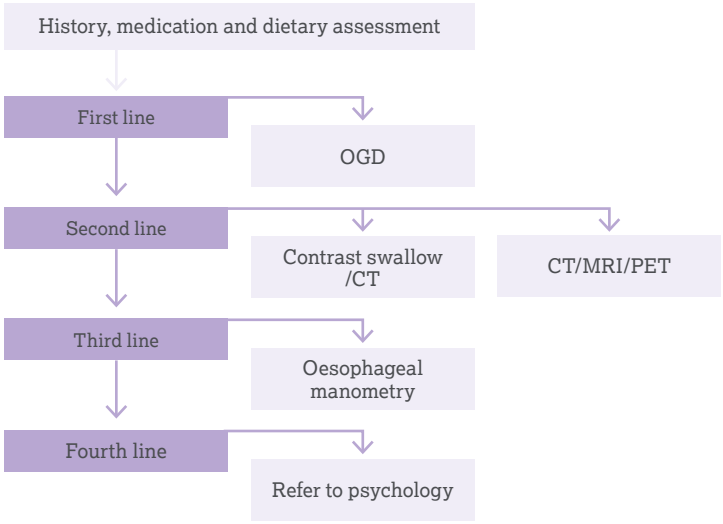

TABLE 16 Investigation and management of low dysphagia

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Dysphagia present	Refer for dietetic support.
Medication findings	Bisphosphonates NSAID Potassium supplements Tetracyclines Theophyllines	Discuss possible alternative medications.
First line		
If fistula unlikely OGD (no endoscopic intervention until discussed at the MDT)	Stricture, if < 6 months after upper GI surgery	OGD ± dilatation (p. 56). Consider treatment for acid/bile reflux (p. 58).
	Stricture, if after radiotherapy or > 6 months after upper GI surgery	OGD with careful biopsy and consider treatment for acid/bile reflux (p.73). CT ± PET scan. Then review in MDT before any further treatment/stent/dilatation (p. 56).
	Inflammation (acid/bile)	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58).
	Local infection (viral/fungal)	Treat infection appropriately.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
If fistula unlikely OGD (no endoscopic intervention until discussed at the MDT) (continued)	Eosinophilic oesophagitis	Refer to gastroenterology.
	No obvious cause	Take SI aspirate (p. 57) to exclude SIBO. Arrange glucose hydrogen methane breath test.
Second line		
Contrast swallow/CT	Fistula with aspiration	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with gastroenterology.
	Stricture	OGD with careful biopsy. Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks to consider dilatation (p. 56)/stent insertion/other management.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Achalasia	Refer to gastroenterology.
CT/MRI/PET	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Third line		
Oseophageal manometry/pH/ impedance studies	Acid reflux	See management of acid related inflammation on p. 58.
	Bile reflux	See management of bile related inflammation on p. 58.
	Spasm	Calcium antagonist. Low dose antidepressant e.g. citalopram. Refer to gastroenterology.
	Scleroderma	Start PPI or H2 antagonist. Refer to rheumatology.
Fourth line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention	Psychological factors	Refer to psychology.

Early satiety

Feeling full after eating a small amount of food.

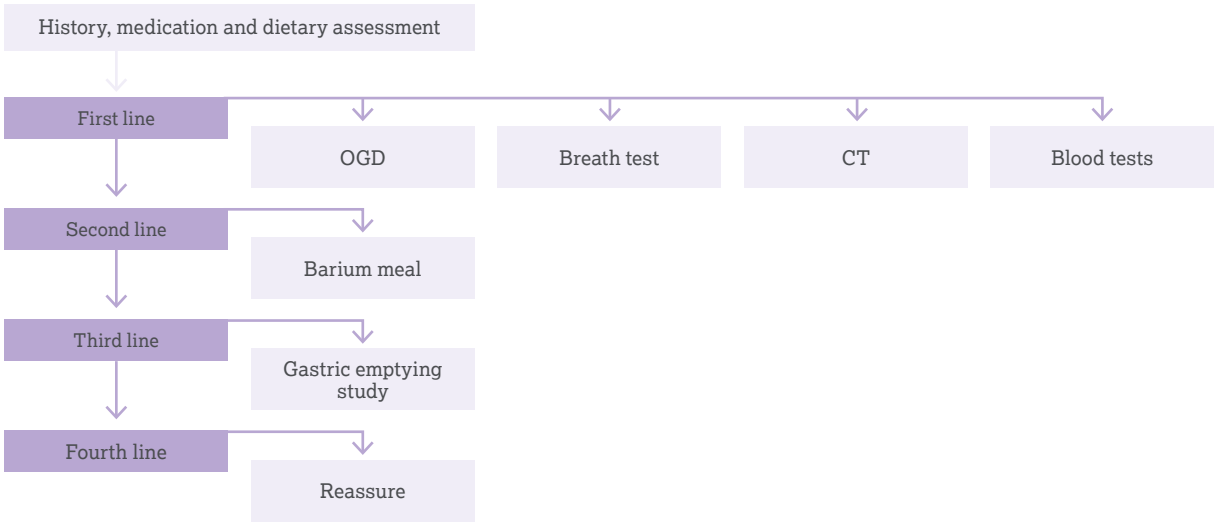

TABLE 17 Investigation and management of early satiety

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	After gastrectomy or oesophagectomy	1. Reassure in the post operative period. 2. Refer for dietetic advice.
	History of diabetes and high blood sugar levels	1. Refer the patient to the GP for further management. 2. Refer for dietetic advice.
	Constipation	See management of constipation (p. 61).
Medication findings	Anticholinergic drugs	Discuss potential alternatives.
First line		
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57)	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Biliary gastritis	See management of bile related inflammation (p. 58).
	Delayed gastric emptying	Consider gastric emptying studies. Assess for SIBO. Consider prokinetics (p. 63). Pyloric dilatation if after oesophagectomy. Referral to dietitian.
	Local infection (viral/ fungal)	Pyloric spasm/stricture Consider dilatation (p. 56) with careful biopsy only after agreement from the appropriate MDT.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
CT chest, abdomen, pelvis	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Routine blood tests	Abnormal results	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Second line		
Barium meal	Pyloric spasm/stricture	Consider dilatation (p. 56) with careful biopsy only after agreement from the appropriate MDT.
Third line		
Gastric emptying study	Delayed gastric emptying	Assess for SIBO. Consider prokinetics (p. 63). Pyloric dilatation if after oesophagectomy. Referral to dietitian.
Fourth line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Epigastric pain *chronic – lasting longer than two weeks*

Pain localised to the region of the upper abdomen immediately below the ribs.

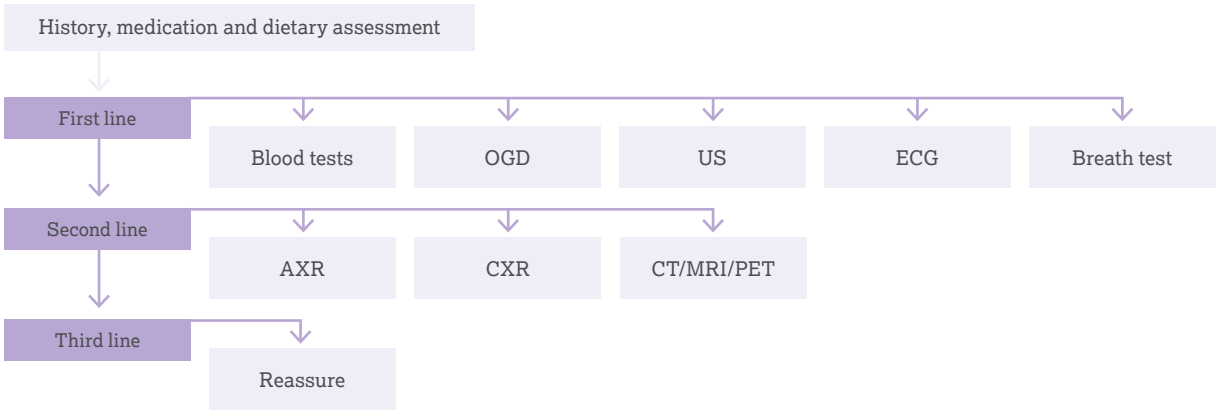

TABLE 18 Investigation and management of chronic epigastric pain

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Neuropathic post-operative pain	Refer to the pain team.
First line		
Routine & additional blood tests	Abnormal results	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57)	Inflammation/ulceration	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58).
	Local fungal infection	Consider treatment with nystatin or fluconazole.
	Oesophageal or pyloric stricture	Consider dilatation (p. 56) with careful biopsy only after discussion with cancer MDT.
	Spasm	1. Start PPI or H2 antagonist. 2. Calcium antagonist. 3. Low dose antidepressant.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Benign peptic ulceration	1. Treat with PPI. 2. Arrange follow up endoscopy if oesophageal or gastric in six weeks. 3. Consider *Helicobacter pylori* eradication.
US	Biliary tree obstruction	**This is an emergency** if any fever. Otherwise discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
	Gallstones Pancreatic duct problems Renal stones	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
	Ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician and the oncology team within 24 hours.
	Mesenteric ischaemia	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with the on-call surgical team immediately.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
US (continued)	Malignancy/ tumour recurrence/ lymphadenopathy	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Pancreatitis	Refer to the appropriate MDT.
ECG	Acute cardiac ischaemia	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with cardiology.
	Normal resting ECG but cardiac aetiology suspected	Urgent referral to cardiology.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Second line		
AXR	Faecal loading	See management of constipation (p. 61).
	Ileus/obstruction	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with the on-call surgical team and arrange urgent CT scan.
CXR	Infection	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours and treat appropriately.
CT/MRI/PET	Malignancy/ tumour recurrence/ lymphadenopathy	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Consider also 1. Internal hernia (if Roux-en-Y) 2. Jejunal tube complication, e.g. volvulus (if still in situ) 3. Pancreatitis	**These are emergencies**. Refer to upper GI surgical team.
	Mesenteric ischaemia	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with the on-call surgical team immediately.
	Ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician and the oncology team within 24 hours.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

GI bleeding *[haematemesis and/or melaena]*

Vomiting blood or “coffee grounds” and/or black "tarry" faeces associated with upper GI bleeding.

This is an emergency

TABLE 19 Investigation and management of upper GI bleeding

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from assessments		
History findings		**This is an emergency**. Speak immediately to the on-call GI bleeding team and also to the upper GI surgeon if < four weeks from GI surgery. Routine blood tests. Clotting and cross match.

Halitosis

An unpleasant odour emitted from the mouth.

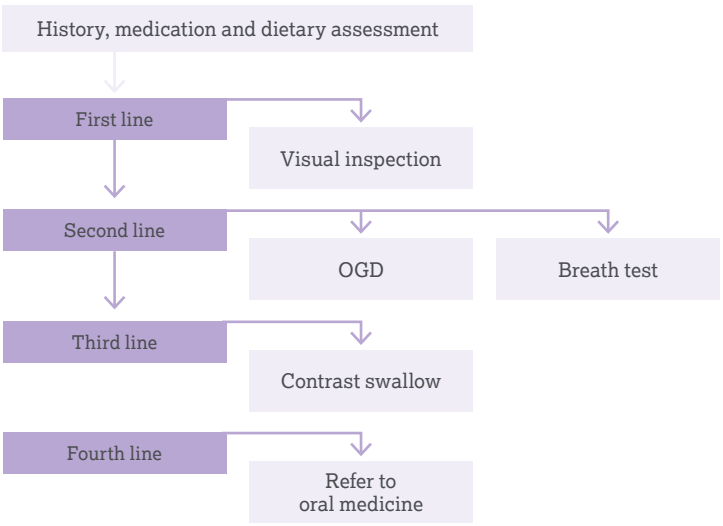

TABLE 20 Investigation and management of halitosis

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Smoking	Smoking cessation advice.
	Absence of saliva	Follow guidelines for dry mouth (p. 27).
Medication findings	Nitrates Phenothiazines[8]	Consider possible alternative options.
Dietary findings	Strong smelling food	Encourage dental hygiene. Reduce dietary foods containing hydrogen sulphide.
First line		
Visual inspection of mouth	Gum disease Tooth decay Hairy tongue	Encourage patient to visit a dentist.
	Candida infection	Antifungal therapy.
	Dry mouth	See p. 27.
Second line		
OGD & SI aspirate (p. 57)	Gastric dysmotility	Consider prokinetics (p. 63).
	Ulceration	Benign: six weeks PPI then reassess. Malignant: as below.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Duodenal obstruction	Discuss with supervising clinician and refer as clinically appropriate to a GI surgeon/gastroenterologist/oncology team within 24 hours.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Third line		
Contrast swallow	Pharyngael pouch	Refer to the ENT/oesophageal surgeon.
Fourth line		
If normal investigations/no response to intervention		Refer to oral medicine.

Hiccups *[singultus]*

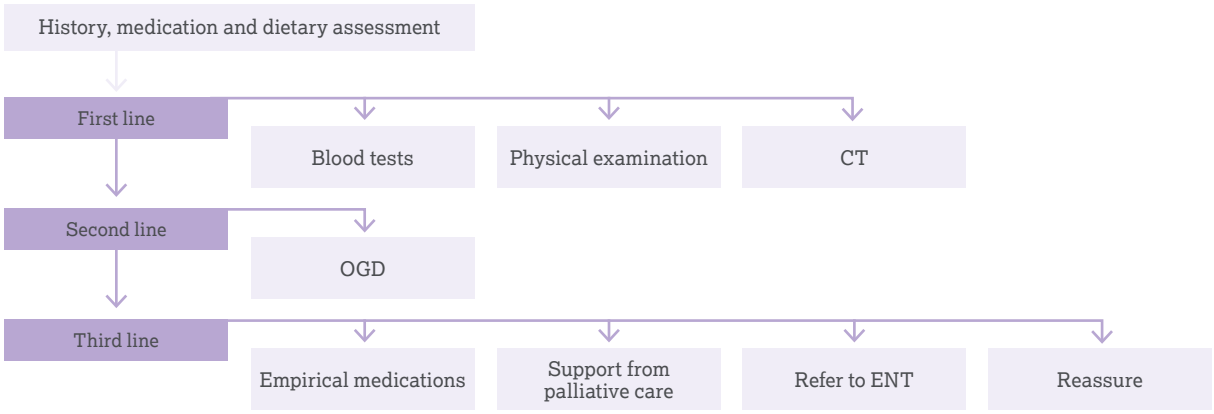

TABLE 21 Investigation and management of hiccups

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Short-term hiccups	Reassure patient.
	Long-term hiccups	Investigate as outlined below.
Medication findings[9]	Corticosteroids Benzodiazepines Barbiturates Opioids Methyldopa	Discuss possible alternative medications.
First line		
Routine blood tests	Infection with vagal irritation: • Pleuritis • Pharyngitis	Treat infection as appropriate.
	Metabolic: • Diabetes • Hypokalaemia • Hypercalcaemia • Uraemia	Treat underlying condition.
Physical examination	Meningitis	**This is an emergency**. Refer immediately to the acute medicine on-call team.
CT chest/abdomen	Acute gastric distension	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with an upper GI surgeon.
	Small bowel obstruction	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with GI surgeon.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Chest pathology	Discuss with supervisory clinician within 24 hours.
	Intra abdominal infection	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with the on-call surgical team.
Second line		
OGD	GORD	Start PPI or H2 antagonist. If following oesophagectomy, consider promotility agents (see p. 63).
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		• Consider empirical baclofen, PPI, chlorpromazine, haloperidol, gabapentin, pregabalin. • Ask for support from palliative care team. • Refer to ENT team. • Reassure.

Hoarse voice *[dysphonia]*

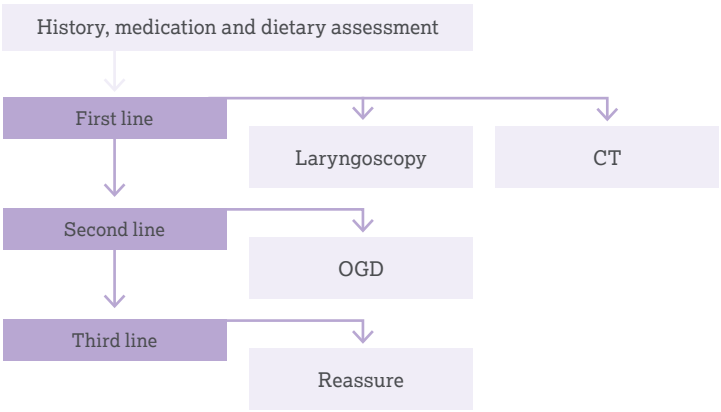

TABLE 22 Investigation and management of hoarseness

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Hoarseness	Voice hygiene advice: 1. Adequate hydration. 2. Avoid vocal strain (shouting, throat clearing, excessive voice use). 3. Smoking cessation advice if smoker. 4. Alcohol reduction (alcohol is an irritant and dehydrating). 5. Refer to SLT.
	Dysphagia/aspiration	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
	Presence of laryngeal obstruction • Dyspnoea, stridor, wheeze, exertional dyspnoea, anxiety or signs of hypoxia • Dysphagia or drooling • Facial or oral oedema	**This is an emergency**. Refer to ENT immediately.
	Presence of other ENT symptoms • Throat or ear pain • Nasal blockage	Refer to ENT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
First line		
Laryngoscopy	Vocal cord palsy	CT scan and refer to cancer MDT within two weeks. Referral to SLT.
CT chest, abdomen, pelvis	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Superior vena cava obstruction	**This is an emergency**. Contact acute oncology service immediately.
Second line		
OGD	GORD	Start PPI or H2 antagonist. If following oesophagectomy, consider promotility agents (see p. 63).
	Cervical inlet patch	Treat with PPI or ablation.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Hypersalivation/drooling *[sialorrhoea] present longer than three weeks*

Production of excessive oral secretions which are not swallowed.

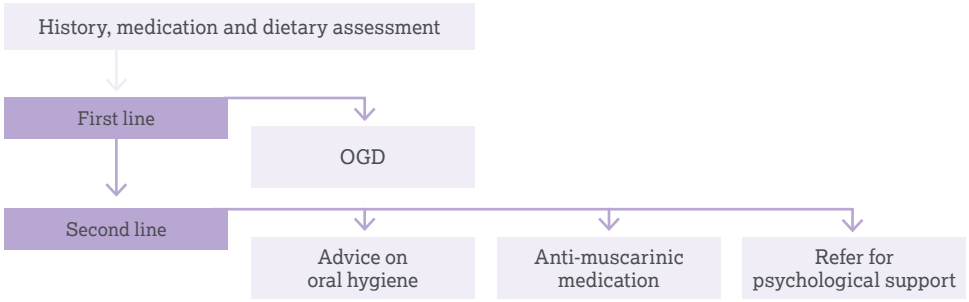

TABLE 23 Investigation and management of hypersalivation

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Problems swallowing saliva	Follow guideline for dysphagia (p. 28–31).
	Neurological disorders	Refer to neurology.
	Problems closing mouth	Establish underlying cause: stroke, jaw fracture or dislocation, facial nerve palsy, Parkinson's disease.
	Infection: • Tonsillitis • Mumps	Treat according to local guidelines.
Medication findings	Clozapine Pilocarpine Potassium Risperidone	Discuss possible alternative medications.
First line		
OGD	GORD	Start PPI or H2 antagonist. If following oesophagectomy, consider promotility agents (see p. 63).
Second line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		1. Advice on oral hygiene. 2. Consider treating with an anti-muscarinic mediation : • Amitriptyline. • Glycopyrronium bromide (glycopyrrolate): oral, nebulized and subcutaneous. • Hyoscine hydrobromide (scopolamine hydrobromide): oral, topical, subcutaneous and nebulised. 3. Consider referral for psychological support.

Jaundice

Yellowish pigmentation of the skin, the conjunctival membranes over the sclerae and other mucous membranes caused by high blood bilirubin levels.

This is an emergency if accompanied by a fever

TABLE 24 Investigation and management of jaundice

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
If there is fever		**This is an emergency**. Discuss with the on-call surgical team immediately.
If there is no fever Blood for FBC, U&E, LFTs, INR, viral serology, glucose, plus full liver screen (p. 9–11) and amylase. Urgent US abdomen plus Doppler of the portal vein.		Discuss with gastroenterology or hepatology team within 24 hours. Warn the patient that if they develop a fever they need to seek immediate medical help.

Nausea *without dysphagia*

Feeling of sickness in the stomach marked by an urge to vomit.
If dysphagia is present with nausea, follow dysphagia guidance (p. 28–31).

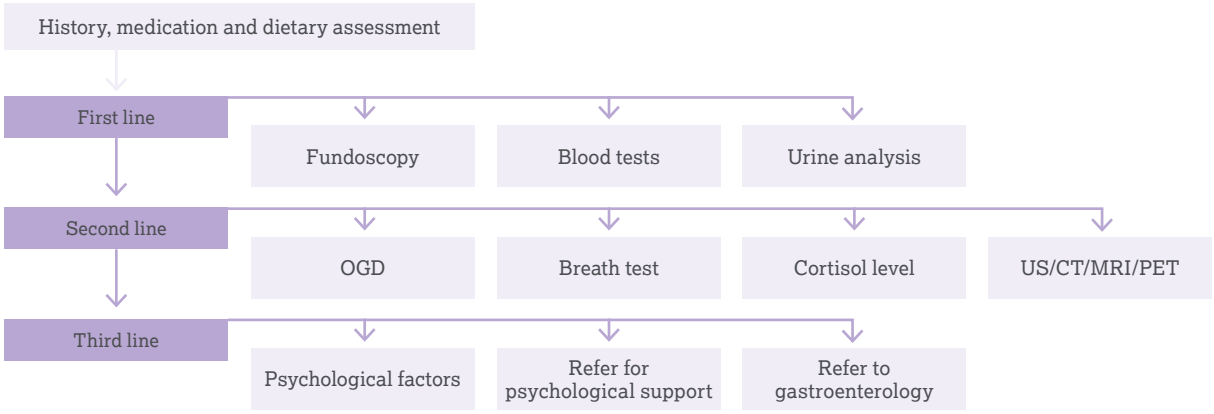

TABLE 25 Investigation and management of nausea

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Symptoms of heart burn/ acid/bile reflux:	1. See management of acid or bile related inflammation on p. 58. 2. Reassess after two to four weeks as clinically indicated.
	With dizziness/ sweating/palpitations	See p. 45.
	Headache/neurological symptoms present	Neurological examination. Fundoscopy and CT/MRI head.
	Poor fluid intake	Check renal function/encourage fluids.
	Constipation/impaction	AXR. See management of constipation (p. 61).
Medication findings	Opiates NSAID	
	Chemotherapy	Contact team to change antiemetics urgently. If multiple vomiting daily **this is an emergency**. Contact the on-call acute oncology team.
Dietary findings	Nutritional compromise	Refer for dietetic advice.
First line		
Fundoscopy	Raised ICP	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with the supervising clinician and oncology or neurology team.
Routine & additional blood tests	Metabolic abnormality	Discuss immediately with the supervising clinician.
	Liver/biliary abnormality	Discuss with the supervising clinician within 24 hours.
	Suggestive of infection	Treat with antibiotics within level of confidence or discuss with microbiologist or supervising clinician.
Urine analysis	Metabolic abnormality e.g. glucosuria, ketonuria	Discuss immediately with supervising clinician.
	Infection	Treat with antibiotics within level of confidence or discuss with microbiologist or supervising clinician within 24 hours.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Second line		
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57)	Upper GI inflammation/ ulceration	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58).
	Gastric dysmotility	Consider prokinetic medication (p. 63).
	Pyloric stenosis	Refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT.
	Bleeding peptic ulcer	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with supervising clinician/gastroenterologist.
	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
US Liver and pancreas	Biliary/hepatic/ pancreatic aetiology	Discuss with gastroenterologist or hepatology team immediately. If acute jaundice/cholangitis present, **this is an emergency**. See management of jaundice on p. 41.
Cortisol level	Addison's disease	Confirm with synacthen test, start on hydrocortisone and refer to endocrinology.
US/CT/MRI/PET	Malignancy/ tumour recurrence/ lymphadenopathy	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Consider also 1. Internal hernia (if Roux-en-Y) 2. Jejunal tube complication, e.g. volvulus (if still in situ) 3. Pancreatitis	**These are emergencies**. Refer to upper GI surgical team.
	Mesenteric ischaemia	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with the on-call surgical team immediately.
	Ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician and the oncology team within 24 hours.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		1. Consider contributing psychological factors. 2. Consider referral for psychological support if there is a possible underlying eating disorder. 3. Consider a routine referral to gastroenterology for further management.

Pain on swallowing *[odynophagia]*

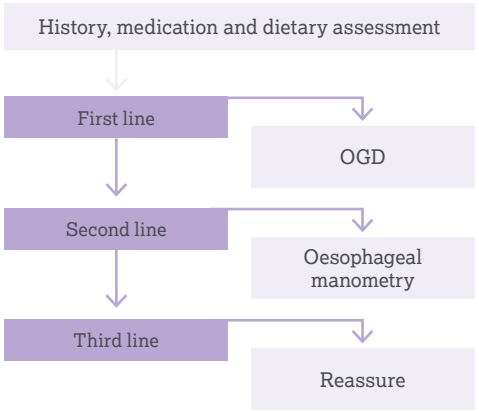

TABLE 26 Investigation of pain on swallowing

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Previous upper GI stent	Start simple analgesia Refer to pain team.
Medication findings	Bisphosphonates NSAID	Discuss alternative medication.
Dietary findings	Nutritional compromise	Refer for dietetic advice.
First line		
OGD (do not biopsy obvious radiation change/ ulceration)	Stricture	See the guidance on p. 28–31.
	Candidiasis	Antifungal therapy.
	Viral ulceration	Consider antiviral therapy, e.g. • Aciclovir for HSV. • Ganciclovir for CMV.
	Radiotherapy induced ulceration Mucositis	1. Pain control, e.g. fentanyl patch. 2. Regular mucaine/oxetacaine/sucralfate. 3. PPI. 4. Consider low dose of SSRI. 5. Refer to pain team. 6. Refer for dietetic advice.
	Other causes of ulceration	Malignancy: refer to the appropriate MDT within 24 hours. Drug causes, revise medication. Acid/bile reflux. See p. 58.
Second line		
Oseophageal manometry/pH/ impedance studies	Spasm	Calcium antagonist. Low dose antidepressant e.g. citalopram. Refer to gastroenterology.
	Scleroderma	1. Start PPI or H2 antagonist. 2. Refer to rheumatology.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Postprandial dizziness/sweating/palpitations/somnolence
after oesophagectomy/gastrectomy/pancreatectomy

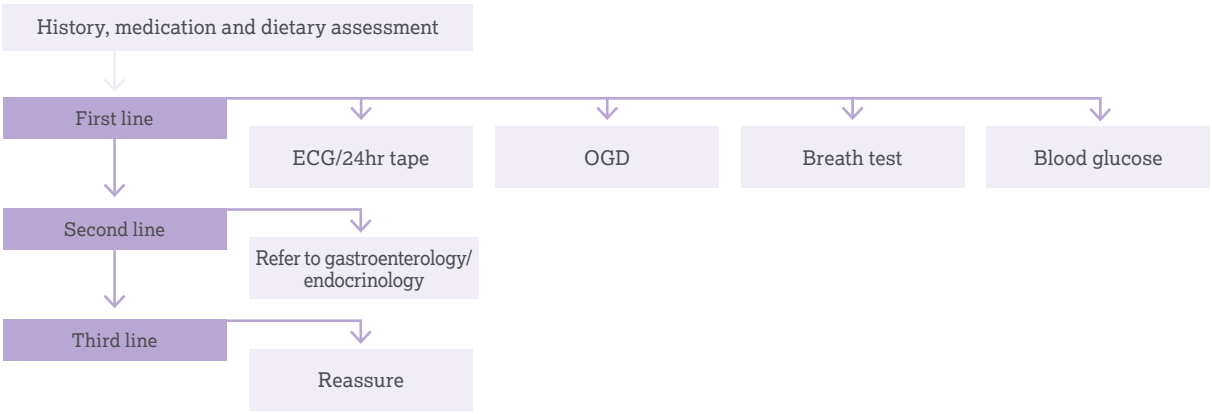

TABLE 27 Investigation and management of potential dumping

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	History of upper GI resectional surgery	Refer for dietetic advice.
	30–60 minutes after eating with sweating, dizziness, tachycardia	Refer for dietetic advice: 1. Eat smaller, more frequent meals. 2. Eat slowly. 3. Avoid a lot of fast acting sugars e.g. cakes, chocolate, sugary drinks and sweets. 4. Advise more longer acting carbohydrate foods. 5. If no response, trial acarbose/octreotide. 6. Trial of low dose beta blocker.
	Somnolence 1–3 hours after eating	1. Monitor blood sugar. 2. Refer for dietetic advice. 3. If mild, reassure.
First line		
ECG/24 hour tape	Cardiac disease	Discuss with supervising clinician within 24 hours.
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57)	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Monitor blood glucose	If abnormally high	Refer to GP/endocrinology.
	If abnormally low	Refer for dietetic advice.
Second line		
Persisting unexplained symptoms	Consider insulinoma/ neuroendocrine tumour	Refer to gastroenterology/endocrinology.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Reflux (acid/bile)/heartburn

If dysphagia is present with reflux, follow dysphagia guidance on p. 28–31 instead. In gastro-oesophageal reflux, acid refluxes from the stomach into the oesophagus. In duodenogastric reflux, bile refluxes from the duodenum into the stomach and oesophagus.

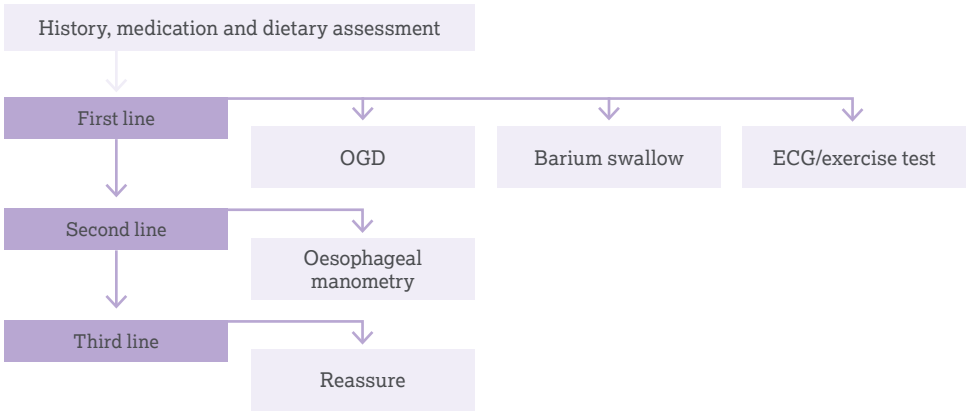

TABLE 28 Investigation and management of reflux

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Previous upper GI surgery	1. Refer to dietitian • Avoid eating late at night. • Raise head of the bed. • Reduce smoking, alcohol, caffeine, fat. • Reduce weight if high BMI. • Avoid large portions. 2. Assess for SIBO. 3. Trial of PPI (unless after total gastrectomy) 4. Trial of agents to reduce bilary reflux 5. Trial of prokinetics.
	Stress related	1. Consider stress management techniques. 2. Consider referral for psychological support.
First line		
OGD	Inflammation/ulceration	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58). Lifestyle changes: reduce smoking, alcohol, chocolate, caffeine, fatty food, carbonated drinks, citrus. Assess weight and BMI.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Pyloric stenosis (after upper GI surgery)	Consider dilatation (p. 56) with careful biopsy only after agreement from the appropriate MDT.
Barium swallow	Oesophageal stricture	See the guidance on p. 28–31.
	Delayed emptying	1. Assess for SIBO (p. 64). 2. Prokinetics (p. 63) 3. Consider formal gastric emptying studies. 4. Consider dilatation (p. 56) with careful biopsy only after agreement from the appropriate MDT.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Barium swallow (continued)	Oesophageal spasm	1. Start PPI or H2 antagonist. 2. Calcium antagonist. 3. Low dose antidepressant e.g. citalopram. 4. Confirm with oesophageal manometry, pH/impedance studies.
ECG/exercise test	Cardiac related	**This is an emergency**. Refer to cardiology.
Second line		
Oseophageal manometry/pH/ impedance studies	Spasm	Calcium antagonist. Low dose antidepressant e.g. citalopram. Refer to gastroenterology.
	Scleroderma	1. Start PPI or H2 antagonist. 2. Refer to rheumatology.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Regurgitation

The expulsion of material from the mouth, pharynx, or oesophagus, usually characterized by the presence of undigested food.

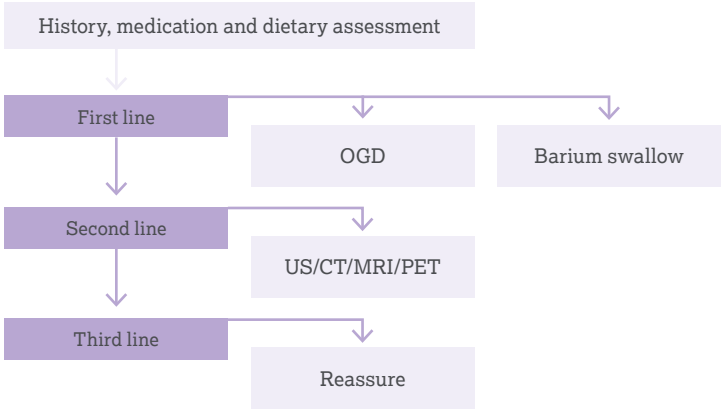

TABLE 29 Investigation and management of regurgitation

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	History of (partial) gastrectomy or oesophagectomy	1. Small but frequent meals. 2. Refer for dietetic advice. 3. Consider starting prokinetic drugs. 4. PPI/H2 antagonist ± sucralfate.
	Rumination (Regurgitation with no obvious cause)	1. Refer to gastroenterology. 2. Consider referral for psychological support.
First line		
OGD	Oesophageal stricture	See the guidance on p. 28–31.
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Barium swallow	Pharyngeal pouch	Refer to ENT.
	Oesophageal stricture	See the guidance on p. 28–31.
	Delayed emptying	1. Assess for SIBO (p. 64). 2. Prokinetics (p. 63). 3. Consider formal gastric emptying studies. 4. Pyloric dilatation if after oesophagectomy.
	Oesophageal spasm/ motility disorder	1. Start PPI or H2 antagonist. 2. Calcium antagonist. 3. Low dose antidepressant e.g. citalopram. 4. Confirm with oesophageal manometry, pH/impedance studies. 5. Refer to gastroenterology.
ECG/exercise test	Cardiac related	**This is an emergency**. Refer to cardiology.
Second line		
US/CT/MRI/PET	Malignancy/ tumour recurrence/ lymphadenopathy	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
US/CT/MRI/PET (continued)	Consider also 1. Internal hernia (if Roux-en-Y) 2. Jejunal tube complication, e.g. volvulus (if still in situ) 3. Pancreatitis	**These are emergencies**. Refer to upper GI surgical team.
	Mesenteric ischaemia	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with the on-call surgical team immediately.
	Ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician and the oncology team within 24 hours.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Reassure.

Steatorrhoea

The presence of excess fat in the stool. Stools may float, be difficult to flush away and have an oily appearance. Sometimes pale (chalk/sand) in colour. Sometimes an oily film can be seen in the lavatory water after defaecation.

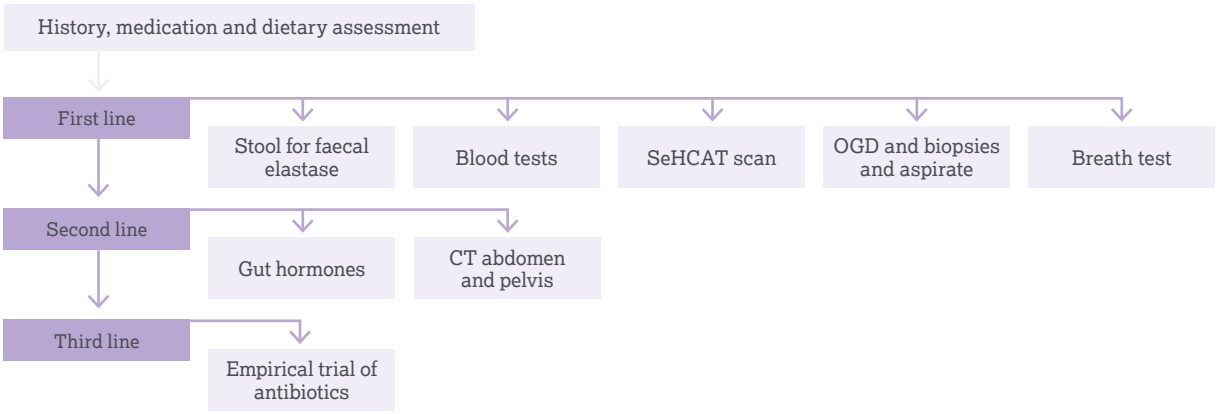

TABLE 30 Investigation and management of steatorrhoea

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
First line		
Stool sample for faecal elastase	Pancreatic insufficiency	Management of EPI (p. 62).
Routine and additional blood tests	Addison's disease Coeliac disease Thyroid dysfunction	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
Blood tests for malabsorptive symptoms	Malabsorptive pathology	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
SeHCAT scan	BAM/BAD	Management of BAM/BAD (p. 58).
OGD and SI aspirate and biopsies (p. 57)	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
	Intestinal parasites	Treat with antibiotics within level of confidence or discuss with microbiologists and supervising clinician.
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Second line		
Gut hormones (Chromogranin A&B, gastrin, substance P, VIP, calcitonin, somatostatin, pancreatic polypeptide) and Urinary 5-HIAA and CT/MRI liver and abdomen	Neuroendocrine tumour	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate neuroendocrine MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
CT abdo pelvis/ capsule endoscopy/ MRI enteroclysis	Small intestinal disease	Discuss immediately and refer to the appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks, or if no malignancy to a gastroenetrologist.
Third line		
If normal investigations/no response to intervention		1. Trial of empirical antibiotics to exclude test negative SIBO. 2. Trial of low fat diet.

Vomiting *[emesis]*

If dysphagia is present, follow dysphagia guidance on p. 28–31 instead.

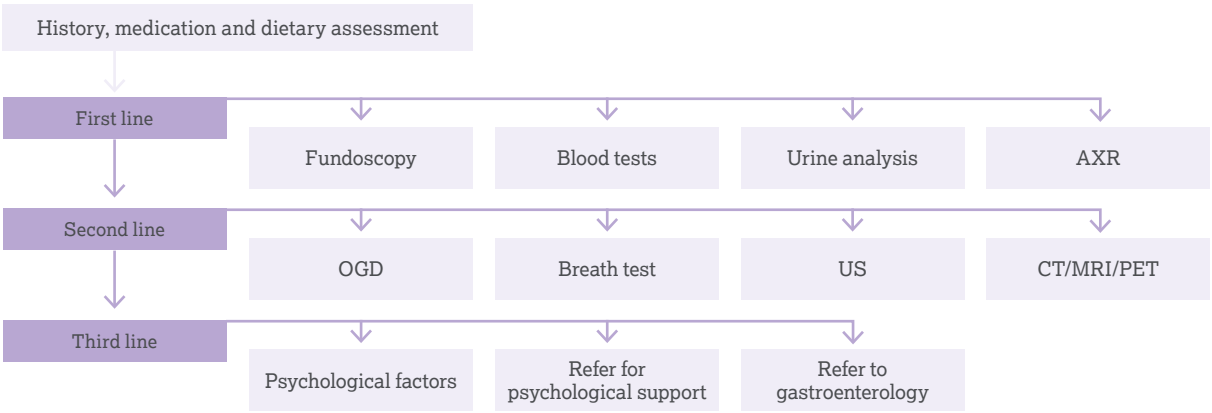

TABLE 31 Investigation and management of vomiting

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	Symptoms of heart burn/ acid reflux:	1. Trial of proton pump inhibitor ± trial of antiemetic 2. Reassess after two to four weeks as clinically indicated.
	If within two weeks after surgery	Discuss with surgical team within 24 hours.
	Chemotherapy related	Contact team to change antiemetics urgently.
	Persistent vomiting	**This is an emergency**. Contact the on-call medical team.
	Nutritional compromise	Refer for dietetic advice.
First line		
Fundoscopy	Raised ICP	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with the supervising clinician.
Routine & additional blood tests	Metabolic abnormality	Discuss immediately with the supervising clinician.
	Liver/biliary abnormality	Discuss with the supervising clinician within 24 hours.
	Suggestive of infection	Treat with antibiotics within level of confidence or discuss with microbiologist/supervising clinician.
Urine analysis	Metabolic abnormality e.g. glucosuria, ketonuria	Discuss immediately with supervising clinician.
	Infection	Treat with antibiotics within level of confidence or discuss with microbiologist/supervising clinician within 24 hours.
AXR (if with pain)	Small bowel obstruction	**This is an emergency**. Discuss immediately with GI surgeon and arrange urgent CT scan.
	Faecal loading	See management of constipation (p. 61).
Second line		
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57)	Upper GI inflammation/ ulceration	See management of acid or bile related inflammation (p. 58). Assess Helicobacter pylori and treat if positive. Discuss with supervising clinician need for future repeat endoscopy.
	Gastric dysmotility	Consider prokinetics (p. 63).

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
OGD and SI aspirate (p. 57) (continued)	Pyloric stricture	Consider dilatation (p. 56) with careful biopsy only after agreement from the appropriate MDT.
	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
Glucose hydrogen methane breath test	SIBO	Management of SIBO (p. 64).
US liver and pancreas	Biliary/hepatic/pancreatic aetiology	See jaundice (p. 41).
CT/MRI/PET (head/chest/abdomen/ pelvis)	Malignancy/ tumour recurrence/ lymphadenopathy	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Consider also 1. Internal hernia (if Roux-en-Y) 2. Jejunal tube complication, e.g. volvulus (if still in situ) 3. Pancreatitis	**These are emergencies**. Refer to upper GI surgical team.
	Mesenteric ischaemia	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with the on-call surgical team immediately.
	Ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician and the oncology team within 24 hours.
Third line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		1. Consider contributing psychological factors. 2. Consider referral for psychological support if there is a possible underlying eating disorder. 3. Consider a routine referral to gastroenterology for further management.

Weight loss (unintentional)

Reduction of the total body mass greater than 5% in three months, due to a mean loss of fluid, body fat or lean mass.

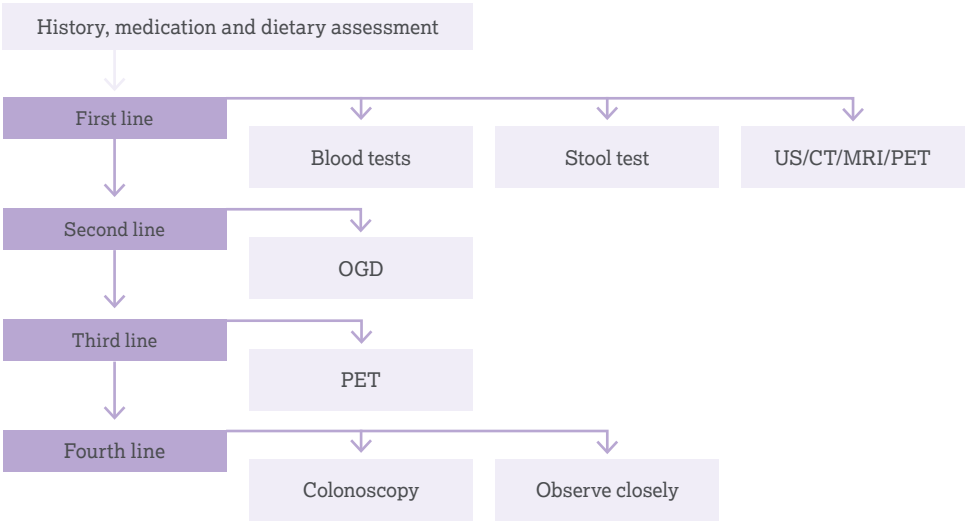

TABLE 32 Investigation and management of weight loss

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Actions from history, medication and dietary assessment		
History findings	No other GI symptoms present	1. Discuss with supervising clinician. 2. Request blood tests. 3. Request OGD, colonoscopy, CT chest abdomen and pelvis. 4. If all investigations normal and appetite is poor, consider psychological support appetite stimulant.
Dietary findings	Inadequate dietary intake/malabsorption	Refer for dietetic advice.
First line		
Routine & additional blood tests	Abnormal results	Follow treatment for abnormal blood results (p. 9–11).
Stool for faecal elastase	Pancreatic insufficiency	Management of EPI (p. 62).
US/CT/MRI/PET	Malignancy/ tumour recurrence/ lymphadenopathy	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	Consider also 1. Internal hernia (if Roux-en-Y) 2. Jejunal tube complication, e.g. volvulus (if still in situ) 3. Pancreatitis	**These are emergencies**. Refer to upper GI surgical team.
	Mesenteric ischaemia	**This is an emergency**. Discuss with the on-call surgical team immediately.
	Ascites	Discuss with supervising clinician and the oncology team within 24 hours.

Investigations	Potential results	Clinical management plan
Second line		
OGD and SI biopsies	Upper GI tract inflammation (p. 57)	1. Proton pump inhibitor/H2 antagonist. 2. Sucralfate suspension. 3. Prokinetics (p. 63).
	Malignancy/tumour recurrence	Refer to appropriate MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
Third line		
PET scan	PET scan positive	Discuss and refer urgently to the appropriate cancer MDT requesting an appointment within two weeks.
	PET scan negative	1. Refer for dietetic advice. 2. Consider psychological causes e.g. depression, underlying eating disorder and refer appropriately for psychological support.
Fourth line		
If normal investigations/ no response to intervention		Consider colonoscopy. Refer to gastroenterology.

Appendices

Guidelines for dilatation

For stricture in the oesophagus that is anastomotic, malignant or radiation-induced in nature.

1. Should be performed only by experienced endoscopists.
2. If tumour is present, endoscopic intervention should only occur after MDT discussion.
3. Dilate to a maximum diameter 15–20mm.
4. Dilate for 20–60 seconds if using a balloon.
5. Dilatation >12mm not required for stent insertion.
6. Do not exceed diameter of the stricture by >7–8mm/ session.
7. Risks are increased after chemotherapy/radiotherapy/ if tumour is present.

How to perform a small intestinal aspirate

1. On intubation with a gastroscope, avoid aspirating oral or oesophageal fluid.
2. Flush 100ml of sterile saline into the small intestine via the endoscope channel.
3. Follow this by 20ml of air to ensure no saline remains in the endoscope channel.
4. Turn down the suction.
5. Leave the fluid to equilibrate with the intestinal contents for a few seconds. Aspirate duodenal fluid into a sterile trap.
6. Send the aspirate sample directly to microbiology.

Management of acid or bile related inflammation in the stomach

Lifestyle management advice

1. Avoid eating late at night.
2. Elevate the head of the bed.
3. Treat constipation. See p. 61.
4. Use of an alginate, e.g. Gaviscon.

Management of acid related inflammation

1. Assess for *Helicobacter pylori*.
2. Proton pump inhibitor.

Management of bile related inflammation

1. Fresh orange juice.
2. Mucaine/oxetacaine.
3. Sucralfate suspension.
4. Altacite.
5. Prokinetics (p. 63).

Management of bile acid malabsorption/bile acid diarrhoea

Definition

BAM/BAD is secreted by the liver in direct response to the amount of ingested dietary fat. Bile acid malabsorption (BAM)/bile acid diarrhoea (BAD) is a defect in the enterohepatic circulation of bile acids.

BAM occurs on the presence of ileal dysfunction when ability to absorb bile acids in the terminal ileum is impaired. BAD occurs when hepatic overproduction overwhelms terminal ileal absorption capacity[12].

Common causes of BAM and BAD

- Chemotherapy
- Ileal disease/resection
- Upper GI resectional surgery including cholecystectomy
- Pancreatic disease
- Pelvic radiotherapy
- Idiopathic

Diagnosis

- 23-seleno -25 homotaurocholic acid (SeHCAT) scan
- C4 blood test
- Trial of bile acid sequestrant

Severity scores of bile acid malabsorption

7 day SeHCAT retention	BAM/BAD status
15–20%	Borderline BAM/BAD
10–15%	Mild BAM/BAD
5–10%	Moderate BAM/BAD
<5%	Severe BAM/BAD

Treatment

Options include:
1. Dietary fat reduction
2. Antidiarrhoeal medication
3. Bile acid sequestrant

Options 1 and 2 may be useful in mild BAM. Generally, bile acid sequestrants are required for moderate BAM/BAD. For severe BAM/BAD, most patients need large doses of bile acid sequestrant and advice about long-term reduction in dietary fat intake[13].

Drugs that may be helpful include aluminium hydroxide, budesonide, colesevelam, colestipol and colestyramine.

Patients with steatorrhoea usually require colesevelam.

If dietary intervention is required, advice to reduce dietary fat intake to 20% of total calories can be useful but requires dietetic expertise, patient education and supportive literature.

Many patients with moderate/severe BAM/BAD will be deficient in trace elements and fat soluble vitamins. These should be checked periodically and supplemented as appropriate.

Management of carbohydrate malabsorption

For example lactose or other disaccharide intolerance

Definition

Intolerance occurs from the inability to digest carbohydrates. Lactose, a component of milk and some other dairy products, is the intolerance most frequently recognised. It is due to lack of the enzyme lactase in the small intestine. Primary hypolactasia affects 70% of the world's population. Lactose or other disaccharide or monosaccharide (e.g. fructose) malabsorption may occur *de novo* during cancer therapies (such as 5-FU chemotherapy or radiotherapy), due to damage to brush border enzymes and in some patients persists long-term[14 15].

Diagnosis of carbohydrate intolerance

- Trial of exclusion of products containing that specific carbohydrate in diet for one to two weeks. Patient to keep a record of symptoms before and during the exclusion.
- Specific carbohydrate breath test. May be falsely positive with SIBO.
- Small intestine biopsies and assessment for the specific disaccharide or monosaccharide activity.

Treatment

- Long-term exclusion of products containing the carbohydrate in diet.
- Dietetic assessment to ensure diet remains balanced. With lactose intolerance special attention should be paid to calcium intake. Other bone health risk factors should also be considered and vitamin and mineral supplementation started as appropriate[14].
- Consideration of a low fermentable oligo-di-monosaccharides and polyols diet.
- Oral lactases for isolated lactose intolerance.

Management of constipation[16]

1. Dietary advice about healthy fibre and fluid intake.
2. Lifestyle advice about daily exercise.
3. Making time to have a toileting routine, correct positioning on the lavatory.
4. Medications advice.
5. Rectal evacuant (e.g. glycerine suppositories). More effective if used 30 minutes after a meal.
6. Non-fermented bulk laxative ± rectal evacuant.

Further options

1. Consider referral for biofeedback therapy.
2. Consider use of probiotics.
3. Consider use of prucalopride[17]/linacotide[18]
4. Consider rectal irrigation.
5. Consider referral to specialist gastroenterology.

Management of exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI)

Definition

EPI is the inadequate production and/or secretion of pancreatic enzymes and may occur after pelvic radiotherapy with para-aortic lymph node irradiation, pancreatic cancer, upper GI or hepatobiliary surgery and in patients treated with a somatostatin analogue for a neuroendocrine tumour.

Diagnosis

Non-liquid stool sample for faecal elastase measurement (<200µg FE1 per 1g stool) – N.B. Falsely low readings may be present in patients with small bowel bacterial overgrowth. Some patients with levels >200ug will respond to pancreatic enzyme supplementation

Clinical response to pancreatic replacement.

Treatment

- Pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy: requires equivalent of at least 200,000 international units Creon per day (other available brands include Nutrizym, Pancrease HL, Pancrex).
- Starting dose 50,000–75,000 units of lipase with a meal and 25,000–50,000 units with a snack. The final dose of supplement will depend on type of food eaten and symptomatic response.
- Use pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy with all drinks and snacks, depending on size of snack, except black tea, black coffee or water.
- Patients need written guidance on use of enzyme replacement.
- Consider long-term multi vitamin and trace element supplementation.
- Consider dietetic advice to optimise bowel function.
- Occasionally addition of proton pump inhibitor is required to reduce loss of replacement enzymes by gastric acid.

Long-term management

On-going treatment with pancreatic enzyme replacement medication.

Management of gastric dysmotility

May be more effective when used in combination or cyclically.

Effects on stomach[19]

- **Erythromycin:** largely ineffective after 4–8 weeks through tachyphylaxis. Recommended dose 250mg bd as a syrup 30 min before food. Or consider azithromycin 250mg on alternate days.
- **Domperidone:** no tachyphylaxis for 8 weeks, may occur after longer use. Recommended dose 10mg qds 30 min before food as a syrup orally or 30mg qds as a rectal suppository. Small increased risk of cardiac arrhythmia. Current MHRA advice is that its use should be restricted to one week.
- **Metoclopramide:** risk of tardive dyskinesia with use >3 months.
- **Naloxone** by subcutaneous infusion.
- **Paroxetine:** stimulates small intestinal motility only.
- Consider gastric pacemaker.

Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) have issued a number of warnings about the risks of using some of these medications for a longer period[20]. Prescribers should be aware of local policies with regard to the use of these drugs in this context.

Management of small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO)

Definition

SIBO is the presence of excessive bacteria in the small intestine. Small bowel bacterial overgrowth is a common cause for any GI symptom after chemotherapy and upper GI surgery. For any symptom resistant to conventional treatment, consider the possibility of SIBO.

Diagnosis

- There is no gold standard for diagnosing SIBO[21 22].
- Glucose hydrogen methane breath testing ± small intestine aspirate (p. 57) via upper GI endoscopy.
- C reactive protein, RBC folate and total serum bile acid levels may be elevated and vitamin B12 levels and faecal elastase may be low.
- 10–15% patients with negative tests still have SIBO.

Suggested antibiotic treatment options if no growth on culture to direct treatment

(If uncertain, discuss with gastroenterologist/microbiologist)

7–10 days treatment with:

- Ciprofloxacin 500mg twice daily.
- Clarithromycin 500mg twice daily.
- Co-amoxiclav 625mg three times a day.
- Doxycycline 200mg day 1, 100mg days 2–7/10.
- Metronidazole 400mg three times a day.
- Rifaximin 550mg twice daily.
- Vancomycin 250mg four times a day.

Symptoms can recur any time after antibiotics are stopped because the underlying cause of bacterial overgrowth cannot always be addressed. If symptoms return, repeat treatment with antibiotics for a few days every month or continually at the lowest effective dose may be helpful in managing symptoms long-term. Some clinicians recommend rotating antibiotics but this may not be effective if the organisms involved are not sensitive to the antibiotics used.

Treatment decisions should be individualised and consider the risks of long term antibiotic therapy such as Clostridium difficile infection, cumulative irreversible neuropathy with metronidazole, Achilles tendon rupture with ciprofloxacin, intolerance, side-effects, bacterial resistance and costs.[21 22 23 24 14]

Medications that may induce mucositis or change in sense of taste

Chemotherapy drugs that cause mucositis can cause mouth sores to develop. Such drugs include:[25]

- Alemtuzumab (Campath)
- Bleomycin (Blenoxane)
- Capecitabine (Xeloda)
- Cetuximab (Erbitux)
- Docetaxel (Taxotere)
- Doxorubicin (Adriamycin)
- Epirubicin (Ellence)
- Fluorouracil (5-FU)
- Methotrexate (Rheumatrex)
- Vincristine (Oncovin).

Other medicines that have been linked to the development of mouth sores include:

- Aspirin
- Gold used to treat rheumatoid arthritis
- Nicorandil
- Penicillin
- Phenytoin
- Sulfonamides (used in a variety of medications)
- Streptomycin.

Many other medicines have been linked to taste changes:

- Antibiotics
  - Ampicillin
  - Cefamandole (Cephalosporin)
  - Levofloxacin (Levaquin)
  - Lincomycin
  - Metronidazole
  - Tetracyclines
- Anti-epileptics
  - Carbamazepine
  - Phenytoin
- Antifungals
  - Amphotericin B
- Antihistamines
  - Chlorpheniramine maleate
- Antipsychotics
  - Lithium
  - Trifluoperazine (sometimes also used to treat nausea and vomiting)
- Asthma medicines
  - Bamifylline
- Biological agents
  - Erlotinib (Tarceva)
  - Sunitinib (Sutent)
- Bisphosphonates
  - Etidronate
- Blood pressure medications
  - Captopril
  - Diltiazem
  - Enalapril
- Blood thinners
  - Dipyridamole
- Cardiac medications
  - Nicorandil
  - Nitroglycerin patch
- Cancer chemotherapy agents
- Corticosteroids
  - Dexamethasone (DMSO)
  - Hydrocortisone
- Diabetes medications
  - Glipizide
- Diuretics
  - Amiloride
  - Ethacrynic acid (loop diuretic)
- Glaucoma medications
  - Acetazolamide
- Gout medications
  - Allopurinol
  - Colchicine
- Immunosuppressants
  - Azathioprine
- Iron
  - Iron Sorbitex (given by injection)
- Muscle relaxants
  - Baclofen
- Parkinson's disease medications
  - Levodopa
- Smoking cessation products
  - Nicotine skin patch
- Thyroid medicines
  - Carbimazole
  - Methimazole.

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