

Eosinophilic Esophagitis

Eosinophilic esophagitis is an increasingly common disease in which a type of white blood cell, the eosinophil, causes injury and inflammation to the esophagus (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach). Eosinophilic esophagitis is reported to be more common in males, and may affect both adults and children.

<p>Symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflux that does not respond to acid blocking medicines • Difficulty feeding and/or gaining weight • Poor growth • Difficulty swallowing • Food sticking in the throat (food impaction) • Chest pain 	<p>Associated Diseases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental allergies • Asthma • Food allergies
<p>Causes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally believed to be typically caused by an immune response to specific foods. • Many patients have food or environmental allergies. • Genetic predisposition in some families 	<p>Diagnosis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper endoscopy (placement of a lighted tube into the mouth, esophagus and stomach) • Esophagus, stomach, and first part of small intestine are examined. Biopsies are necessary. • Patients may have EoE even if esophagus looks normal during endoscope. Biopsies will help in making accurate diagnosis.
<p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endoscopy may show inflammation or irritated tissue • Biopsy shows a count of 15 or more eosinophils per high-powered microscopic field. Consensus guidelines for diagnosis and management of EoE have been published. 	<p>Allergy Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergy testing may be helpful in some patients to identify and remove offending food allergens.
<p>Treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination diet (allergy test directed or empiric “six-food elimination” diet) • Topical steroids • Avoid known allergens or triggers • Elemental diet (avoid all food protein and obtain all nutrition from a special formula) 	<p>Prognosis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good response to treatment in most • Recurrent episodes can occur. Untreated episodes may cause scar tissue to form in the esophagus and cause problems with swallowing.