

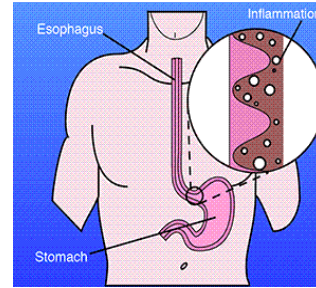


CENTRAL TEXAS ALLERGY & ASTHMA

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EOSINOPHILIC ESOPHAGITIS



What is Eosinophilic Esophagitis?

Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE) is an allergic/immune condition. This condition creates inflammation or swelling of the esophagus. In EoE, large numbers of white blood cells called eosinophils are found in the tissue of the esophagus. Normally there are no eosinophils in the esophagus. EoE can occur at any age and the symptoms vary with age. In infants and toddlers, you may notice that they refuse their food or are not growing properly. School-age children often have recurring **abdominal pain**, **trouble swallowing** or **vomiting**. Teenagers and adults most often have difficulty swallowing. The esophagus can narrow to the point that food gets stuck. EoE is considered to be a chronic condition.

What causes EoE?

Environmental allergies to substances such as dust mites, animals, pollen and molds can play a role in EoE. For some patients, it may seem like their EoE is worse during pollen seasons. Allergy testing for these common environmental allergies is often part of the EoE evaluation. Adverse immune responses to food are the main cause of EoE in a large number of patients. Foods such as dairy products, egg, soy and wheat are main causes of EoE. If you are diagnosed with specific food allergies after prick skin testing and patch testing, your doctor may remove specific foods from your diet. If a food is contributing to EoE and is then removed from a patient's diet, symptoms can improve in a few weeks.

How is EoE diagnosed?

Currently the only way to diagnose EoE is with an endoscopy and biopsy of the esophagus. The EoE diagnosis is made by both a gastroenterologist and pathologist. After the diagnosis of EoE has been made by a gastroenterologist, it may be important to have food allergy testing. This will provide you and the gastroenterologist with information that may help treat allergic aspects of EoE.

How should EoE be treated?

There are currently no medications approved to treat EoE. However, some medications have been shown to reduce the number of eosinophils in the esophagus and improve symptoms. Swallowing small doses of corticosteroids is the most common treatment. Proton pump inhibitors, which control the amount of acid produced, have also been used to help diagnose and treat EoE.

Management of EoE

It is very important to work with your gastroenterologist for advice on managing EoE and figuring out when endoscopies are needed to check to see if the condition is getting better or worse. Patients also need to work closely with their allergist/ immunologist to find out if food allergies are playing a role. If you are following a diet to treat your EoE, it's often recommended to visit a dietician. When you first find out you have EoE, it can be overwhelming. Families often benefit from participating in support groups and organizations. Two organizations that have ongoing relationships with one of the National Allergy Organization, AAAAI, are the American Partnership For Eosinophilic Disorders (www.APFED.org) and the Campaign Urging Research For Eosinophilic Disease (www.curedfoundation.org)