

Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE) Quick Facts

Eosinophilic esophagitis occurs when a type of white blood cell, the eosinophil, causes injury and inflammation to the esophagus. Eosinophilic esophagitis may affect both adults and children. The cause is unknown, but it is believed to typically be caused by an immune response to specific foods.

Symptoms:

- Reflux that does not respond to medication (acid suppressors) – infant, child, adult
- Difficulty swallowing – child, adult
- Food impactions (food gets stuck in the esophagus) – older children, adult
- Nausea and Vomiting – infant, child, adult
- Failure to thrive (poor growth, malnutrition, or weight loss) and poor appetite – infant, child, rarely adult
- Abdominal or chest pain – child, adult
- Feeding refusal/intolerance or poor appetite – infant, child
- Difficulty sleeping due to chest or abdominal pain, reflux, and/or nausea – infant, child, adult

Associated Diseases:

- Environmental and/or food allergies in some
- May occur in conjunction with other eosinophilic gastrointestinal disorders

Causes:

- Unknown
- Food or environmental allergies may play a role in some patients

Diagnosis:

- Upper endoscopy of esophagus, stomach, and the first part of the small intestine. Biopsies from two or more esophageal levels, targeting areas of apparent inflammation are necessary to make the diagnosis.
- Eosinophils causing injury on biopsy, in the context of symptoms consistent with EoE.

Findings:

- Endoscopy may show esophageal rings, longitudinal furrows, exudates, edema, strictures, narrowing, crepe-paper mucosa of esophagus
- Biopsy: Eosinophils invading the esophagus; might involve the stomach and/or first part of small intestine. Biopsy may show chronic inflammation. Consensus recommendations on diagnosis and management are available.

Allergy Testing

- Allergy testing may be helpful in some patients to identify and remove offending food allergens.

Treatment:

- Avoid known food allergens or triggers
- Topical steroids (fluticasone or budesonide)
- Elemental diet (avoid all food protein and obtain all nutrition from a special formula)
- Acid suppressors (proton pump inhibitors [PPIs])
- Dupixent® (dupilumab) was approved in May 2022 for indication to treat EoE in patients aged 12 and older
- Nutritional support as needed
- An esophageal dilation may be considered to treat a narrowed esophagus.

Prognosis:

- Depends on response to treatment
- Recurrent episodes may occur

About APFED: The American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders (APFED) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization for those living with eosinophilic disorders. APFED educates and raises awareness of these conditions, advocates for the unmet needs of patients, and supports research advances. APFED also hosts online community, community events, and an annual patient education conference. For more information, visit apfed.org.