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Eosinophilic Esophagitis

What is eosinophilic esophagitis?

Individuals with eosinophilic esophagitis are found to have inflammation and large numbers of eosinophils present in the tissue of the esophagus. Eosinophils are a type of white blood cell present in the body that are important for immune system function. Normally, eosinophils are not present in the esophagus to any significant degree.

What causes eosinophilic esophagitis?

It is unknown exactly what causes eosinophilic esophagitis, but it is thought to be allergy related. Many individuals with eosinophilic esophagitis have other allergic conditions such as asthma, eczema, or food allergies.

What are the symptoms of eosinophilic esophagitis in adults?

Difficulty swallowing
Food becoming stuck in the esophagus
Acid reflux symptoms that do not respond to treatment
Vomiting

How is eosinophilic esophagitis diagnosed?

The only way to diagnose eosinophilic esophagitis is by doing an endoscopy and taking biopsies of the esophagus. The tissue from the biopsy is then sent to a pathologist who examines the tissue under a microscope and determines if eosinophils are present.

How is eosinophilic esophagitis treated?

Treatment consists of taking an 8-week course of an asthma medication that is swallowed instead of inhaled, stomach acid blocker medications, and testing for food allergens.

Instructions on taking your medication for eosinophilic esophagitis:

1. Place inhaler in your mouth.
2. Release medication into your mouth, do not inhale.
3. Swallow medication with a few sips of water to coat the esophagus (too much water washes the medicine into your stomach too quickly).
4. Swish and spit with additional water to prevent throat infections.
5. Do not eat or drink for 2 hours to allow the medication to work in your esophagus