



# Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE)

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International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders ([www.iffgd.org](http://www.iffgd.org))

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Eosinophilic gastrointestinal disorders (EGIDs) are rare conditions that affect the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. EGIDs can occur in infants, children, and adults. They are often identified by irregular food-related reactions. This occurs with a high number of eosinophils in the GI tract. Eosinophils are white blood cells linked with allergic-type reactions. Their exact role is not known, but they are part of the body's immune response. These cells release toxins that are harmful to the body. Inflammation occurs when these are active, which causes redness and swelling. Immune response is the body's ability to recognize foreign objects that might be harmful, such as bacteria and viruses. The body then destroys them by using specialized cells, eosinophils. EGIDs can occur in any area of the GI tract and are named to match the organs affected. People with EGID's may have more than one of these disorders.

## Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE)

This EGID occurs within the esophagus. Eosinophils gather in the esophagus, causing redness, swelling, and damage.

### Symptoms

- Reflux – a burning feeling in the esophagus (that does not respond well to acid controlling medication)
- A hard time swallowing
- Food getting stuck in the esophagus
- Nausea – a feeling of sickness with an urge to vomit
- Vomiting – bringing food back up from the stomach
- Poor growth or malnutrition (a lack of proper nutrient intake)
- Abdominal or chest pain – pain varying from dull to sharp that occurs inside the stomach, intestines, or chest
- Poor appetite or refusing to eat
- Problems sleeping in children (often because of the symptoms listed above)

These symptoms can occur in patients of all ages. Certain symptoms are seen more often in specific age groups. Poor growth, lack of appetite and refusing to eat are most common in infants and children. Abdominal pain, vomiting and difficulty swallowing are common in school age children. Food getting stuck in the esophagus is most likely to occur in adults.

### Diagnosis

A healthcare provider may also do tests that are not discussed in this fact sheet. These are to see if other conditions might be causing symptoms. Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) has many symptoms similar to those of EoE. GERD is a common condition where patients feel burning in their chest and

throat. An upper endoscopy is done to look for visible signs of EoE. Biopsies are taken to confirm an EoE diagnosis. The endoscopy will show any damage, inflammation, or thickening of the esophagus wall. The biopsy is reviewed to find the number of eosinophils in the tissue sample. A high number suggests an EoE diagnosis. At least six biopsies of the esophagus are recommended for an accurate diagnosis of EoE. Biopsies are especially important in EoE testing. About 20% of people with EoE can have an endoscopy that appears normal.

### Treatment

Treatment of all EGIDs vary from person to person. The symptom severity and other conditions play a role in building a treatment plan.

- Dietary restrictions are one of the most common treatment options for EoE. Food allergy testing may be used to find foods that are causing the increase in eosinophils. The results of this test are then used to develop restriction diets. This type of diet is used to find and eliminate foods that cause symptoms. IFFGD's Dietitian Listing is a resource that allows you to search for a dietitian that is in your area or treats a specific condition.
- Drugs are also a common treatment option for EoE. Examples of these drugs are listed in the table below.
- Many people need topical or systemic corticosteroids (see table) to ease symptoms. These drugs can cause long or short-term

symptom improvement. Topical and systemic corticosteroids are man-made drugs. They mimic the hormones naturally found in the body. This can help to control tasks in the body when there are not enough hormones present. One important task of these hormones is to minimize swelling.

- Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) are used for people who have reflux symptoms. Reflux occurs when there is burning feeling in the throat or chest. PPI's affect the glands in the stomach to reduce the amount of acid they produce.
- Some people with EoE will sometimes feel food getting stuck in their throat. A healthcare provider might suggest dilating the throat to resolve this symptom. This procedure involves inserting a tube or balloon into the narrowed portion of the throat. The tube or balloon then expands to stretch out the muscle.

## Conclusion

For all people diagnosed with EGIDs, a treatment plan designed for each person is ideal. Biopsies will be done throughout treatment to manage the disease and check if treatment is effective. It is important to discuss all symptoms with a healthcare provider. A full medical history helps provide an accurate diagnosis. Successful treatment can only happen after a proper diagnosis. Early diagnosis is important to ensure the best symptom relief and overall health.

Building a healthcare team will ensure the best care and disease management. This team may include a gastroenterologist, allergist, pathologist, dietitian, and any other relevant healthcare provider.

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### About IFFGD

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<b>Common Treatment options for Eosinophilic gastrointestinal disorders (EGIDs)</b>	
<b>Drug</b>	<b>Brand name examples</b>
<b>Systemic Corticosteroid</b>	
Prednisone	<del>Ravos</del> , Prednisone <del>Intensol</del> , and Deltasone
<b>Proton Pump Inhibitors</b>	
Pantoprazole	Protonix
Rabeprazole	<del>AcipHex</del>
Omeprazole	Prilosec OTC, <del>Zegerid OTC</del> , <del>OmePPi</del>
<b>Topical Corticosteroid</b>	
Budesonide	<del>Entocort</del> , <del>Uceris</del> , <del>Rhinocort Allergy</del>

This table does not include all drugs available but can be used as a guide to help discuss treatment options with your healthcare provider.