

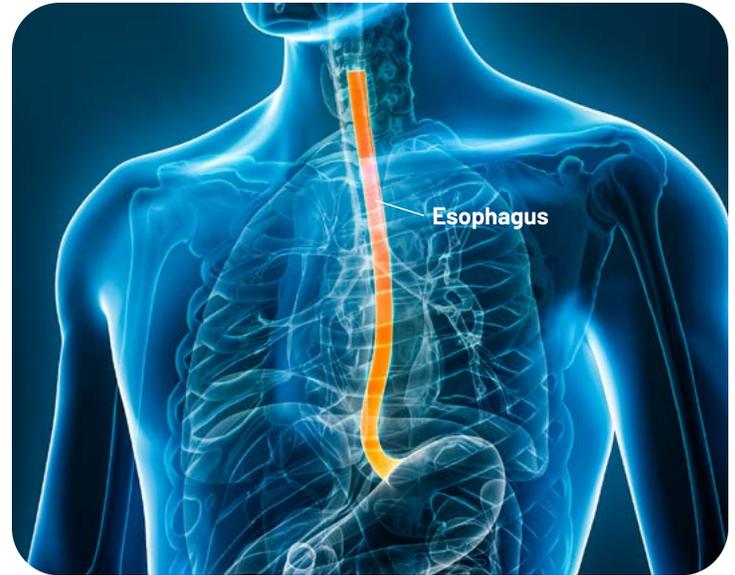
# Eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE): Diagnosis and treatment

## What is eosinophilic esophagitis?

Eosinophilic esophagitis (“ee-o-sin-o-fil-ik” “uh-sof-uh-jie-tis”) or EoE, is a condition that affects the gastrointestinal/ digestive tract. Specifically, it affects the esophagus, the tube that carries food from the mouth to the stomach. With EoE, large numbers of **eosinophils** (type of white blood cell) collect in the esophagus due to inflammation, leading to symptoms.

## What are the symptoms?

EoE symptoms can vary by person and age. The symptoms can range from mild discomfort with little or no pain to very painful and distressing.



Symptoms (in order of most to least frequently reported)	Children < 5 years of age	Children ≥ 5 years of age	Adolescents	Adults
<b>Difficulty swallowing</b> (dysphagia)	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Food sticking</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Chest pain</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Abdominal pain</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Prolonged meal times</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Excessive amounts of fluid intake with meals</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Avoidance of certain food textures</b> (such as dry meats, bread, rice, harder foods)	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Heartburn</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Food impaction</b> (when food becomes stuck in the esophagus) – this is a medical emergency	Rare	Infrequent	✓	✓
<b>Poor weight gain/growth</b>	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Vomiting</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Regurgitation</b>	✓			
<b>Food refusal</b> (fussy eaters)	✓			

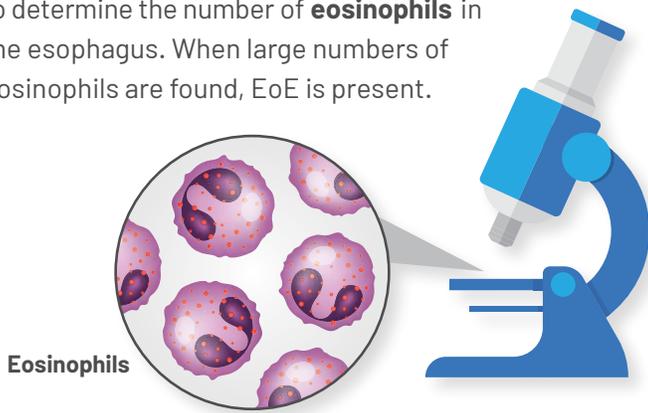
**!** Most commonly, there is **difficulty swallowing** (dysphagia) when eating. Food may feel like it is travelling slowly down the esophagus or sticking in the chest. It can happen only sometimes or every time a person eats.

## What are the causes of EoE?

EoE is triggered by different factors. Sometimes, it can be a delayed allergic response to certain foods, like cow's milk, wheat, soy, and egg, and less commonly peanut, tree nuts, fish and shellfish (crustaceans like lobster or shrimp, and molluscs like scallops or clams). In other cases, it can be associated with environmental allergens like pollen.

## How is EoE diagnosed?

If EoE is suspected, your doctor can refer you to a specialist physician (typically a gastroenterologist) who can perform endoscopy. This procedure is done to determine the number of **eosinophils** in the esophagus. When large numbers of eosinophils are found, EoE is present.



Eosinophils



**Endoscopy** is a procedure where a flexible tube with a light and a tiny camera at the end (an endoscope) is inserted through the mouth for examination of the esophagus.

## How is EoE treated?

EoE can be treated by medications, dietary management, or a combination of these.



### Medications

- Proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs), sometimes called acid blockers, help relieve irritation in the esophagus.
- Topical corticosteroids help reduce inflammation of the esophagus. Budesonide is the only approved corticosteroid for the treatment of EoE in adults and is available in tablet form.
- In severe cases, a biologic medication called dupilumab can be given to adolescents and adults through an intramuscular injection to block the allergic response causing EoE.

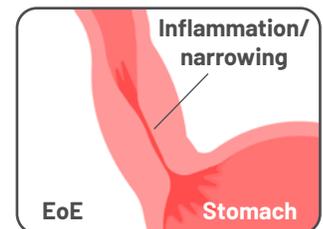
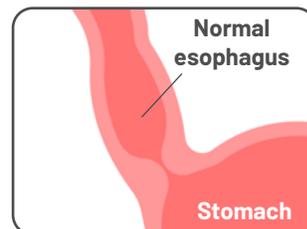


### Dietary management

Elimination diets (removing certain foods) helps determine which food(s) are contributing towards inflammation in the esophagus.

## When EoE is not diagnosed or treated

Some people with EoE develop a narrowing of the esophagus (stricture) which causes further issues with swallowing. A procedure called dilation can be done to widen the esophagus and allow food to pass more comfortably.



## 5 tips for managing EoE

An EoE diagnosis can be overwhelming at first. As you learn more about EoE, managing it can become part of your daily life. Here are tips that can help:



### Seek information

from your healthcare team (e.g., allergist, gastroenterologist, dietitian) and patient organizations like ours



### Follow your treatment plan

(e.g., medications, dietary management, or both)



### Join an EoE support group

(ask your healthcare team for suggestions)



### Educate others,

like family and friends, about EoE so they can better support you



### Talk to a medical professional

if you have any heightened stress and anxiety related to your EoE

Visit [foodallergy.ca/EoE](https://foodallergy.ca/EoE) to learn more.