

# Care Gram

# Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE)

## **What Is Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE)?**

Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE) is a disorder of the esophagus, the tube that carries food from the mouth to the stomach. EoE occurs when white blood cells (called eosinophils) build up inside your esophagus. This type of cell is not normally found in the esophagus.

## **What Causes EoE?**

The exact cause of EoE is unknown, but allergies to pollen, the environment or foods may worsen EoE. EoE also may be common within families, and can affect both children and adults.

## **What Are the Symptoms of EoE?**

The following symptoms are common in adults and teens with EoE:

- Trouble swallowing solid foods
- Heartburn that does not improve with medicine
- Pain in the upper belly or chest
- Food feels stuck in the throat or chest

Children with EoE may:

- Lose weight or have trouble gaining weight
- Refuse to eat solid food
- Complain of belly pain or upset stomach
- Vomit (throw up) food, often with meals

## **How Will I Know If I Have EoE?**

A special test, called an upper endoscopy, can be done to check for this disorder. A doctor with special training in digestive diseases (gastroenterologist) performs the test. During this test, a thin flexible tube with a tiny, lighted camera is placed in the mouth and down the esophagus. The doctor then can check the lining of the esophagus. Samples are taken for study under a microscope. EoE if left untreated may cause rings and/or strictures of the esophagus.



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### How Is EoE Treated?

Diet changes and medicine are used to treat this condition. Your doctor may recommend:

- A 4-food elimination diet – remove dairy, gluten, eggs and legumes
- A 2-food elimination diet – remove dairy and wheat. An upper endoscopy may be repeated. If your symptoms have improved, you can reintroduce one of the foods you eliminated.

You may be asked to avoid certain foods, such as:

- Foods that most often cause EoE
  - Wheat
  - Gluten
  - Eggs
  - Soy
  - Peanuts
  - Tree nuts
  - Fish
  - Shellfish
- Foods that cause symptoms
- Foods to which you are allergic

Your doctor

Medicine also may be used to treat EoE. Examples include:

#### Proton Pump Inhibitor

This type of medicine is used to treat acid reflux – a condition in which acid backs-up into the esophagus from the stomach. Some people with EoE also have acid reflux.

#### Steroids

Steroids can be used to reduce swelling in the esophagus.

#### Dilation

Dilation may be done to widen the esophagus if it becomes too narrow. This procedure is done during an endoscopy.

After 6 to 8 weeks of medication and diet changes, another upper endoscopy is completed to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment. Unfortunately, there are no predicting factors that determine how you respond to treatment.