

# WHY DOES MY CHILD HAVE TROUBLE EATING?

**IT COULD BE EoE.**

Learn why Eosinophilic  
Esophagitis (EoE)  
**makes eating difficult.**

They think I eat  
slow but  
the food just won't  
go down



Images are  
illustrative of  
real EoE patient  
experiences.

# WHAT IS EoE? COULD MY CHILD HAVE IT?

**Eosinophilic Esophagitis, known as EoE,** is an inflammatory condition that can narrow the esophagus and cause damage. **This can make swallowing food difficult** for your child.

EoE can be difficult to spot, so here are clues to look for. If your child **refuses food, gags, or vomits while eating**, it could be EoE.

**Is your child a picky eater** or do they shy away from eating certain foods? Pay attention because this behavior can be signs of EoE.

**EoE doesn't cause an immediate allergic reaction.** There may be a food allergy associated with your child's EoE, but symptoms develop over time. They're not immediate.

See page 5 for more symptoms. If you suspect EoE, talk to your child's doctor.



## Who can get EoE?

Anyone can develop EoE. But it's important to find out early if your child has EoE because it can slow their growth and development. It's also a long-term disease that can continue to cause damage. Unfortunately, many children go undiagnosed each year.

## How does EoE impact my child's health?

When your child struggles to eat and take in the nutrition they need, their physical growth can suffer. They may fail to maintain a healthy weight and fall behind the average weight for their age.

If you don't know why your child struggles with food, keep reading to learn the signs and symptoms of EoE. **Then you'll be more prepared to talk to your child's doctor.**

## What other parents are saying

During meals my daughter often throws up what she just ate. She's only 5 years old, so I'm worried.

— Parent of child with EoE

# WHAT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS SHOULD I LOOK FOR?



**Children with EoE often develop coping behaviors around food.** They may avoid certain foods or have difficulty changing from soft to solid food when they're very young. As they get older, they may shy away from unfamiliar foods and flavors.

## What other parents are saying

My son would be screaming and crying, holding his belly. Time and again in the ER, they would say it's acid reflux.

— Parent of child with EoE

**SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN CAN VARY, but these are common. Do any of them sound like your child's?**



Food refusal and regurgitation



Vomiting



Heartburn/  
Acid reflux



Symptoms similar to gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)



Difficulty swallowing



Excessive Chewing



Uncooperative around food



Adding excessive sauces or liquids



Slow eating



Irritability



Failure to maintain weight and grow

**Also, the feeling of food being stuck in the throat, and stomach or chest pain, are common symptoms.** If eating is an ongoing struggle for your child, ask their doctor if they should be tested for EoE.



Why DOES dinner  
Always MAKE  
ME  
SICK



Some children express themselves better by drawing. Now that you know the symptoms, ask your child to draw how they feel.



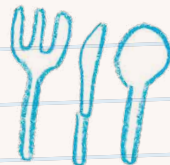
# WHAT CAUSES EoE?

EoE may be triggered by certain foods and/or by allergens we breathe in. It is known that a certain type of inflammation, known as **Type 2 inflammation**, can cause EoE symptoms. This is the same inflammation that contributes to asthma and eczema, so if those conditions run in your family, EoE may be more likely.

If your child has difficulty eating, you're probably searching to find out why. Your child's doctor may have some of the answers, so it's important to ask informed questions.

## Why is EoE so hard to detect?

EoE symptoms can be vague and are often mistaken for a food allergy where a reaction occurs right away. **With EoE, the symptoms develop over time.**



## Is it GERD or EoE?

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and EoE share similar symptoms, but they're different. Unlike EoE, GERD happens when stomach acid repeatedly flows back into the esophagus, irritating its lining. This is a reason why EoE is managed differently than GERD.

## Can EoE limit my child's activities?

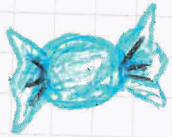
If your child has EoE, it can be difficult to make plans or go to events that focus on food because eating is so unpredictable for them. When surveyed, **1 out of 3 caregivers say EoE has had a high impact on the physical health, emotional health, and social life of their children.**



When your child is very young, you're still getting to know their eating habits and preferences, so it's key to know what to look for. **If the signs and symptoms on the previous pages sound familiar, talk to your child's doctor.**







# HOW DOES EoE CHANGE THE ESOPHAGUS?

EoE symptoms are caused by chronic inflammation that damages the esophagus. And because EoE is a progressive condition, **it can continue to damage the esophagus.** This can make swallowing food difficult now and for many years to come.

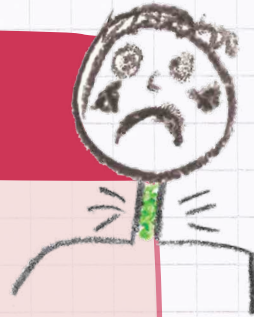
**Because EoE is progressive, it's important for your child to be tested for EoE.**

## What other parents are saying

*My son was throwing up so much and so forcefully that it would come out of his nose.*

*— Parent of child with EoE*

## Inflammation can damage the esophagus



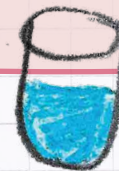
Normal esophagus



Inflammation builds up



As inflammation and scarring build up, the opening may progressively narrow



## How to confirm if it's EoE

Tell your child's doctor about their struggles with food and eating-related symptoms. If the doctor thinks your child may have EoE, they'll probably refer you to a gastroenterologist. That's a doctor who specializes in digestive issues.

# ARE THERE TREATMENTS THAT CAN HELP?

If your child is diagnosed with EoE, you'll want to talk to your child's EoE specialist about treatment options.

**Different treatments vary based on how they're taken and the level of symptom relief they provide.**



## What other parents are saying

My son felt like he had food stuck in his throat and would put his hands in his mouth to try to get it out.

– Parent of child with EoE



## Food Elimination Diet

Eliminating certain food groups by trial to try and reduce symptoms.

## Medical Therapies

Different methods to reduce symptoms include biologics, proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), and swallowed topical steroids.

## Esophageal Dilation

A short-term treatment procedure that stretches the esophagus.



## INVOLVE YOUR CHILD

**Talk about treatment options with your child if they're old enough.**

**Your child looks to you for answers, so explain the treatment in a way they can understand. Be calm and comforting.** Chances are you'll both feel more confident about getting started when you set a positive example.

# COULD IT BE EoE?

**Start by answering a few questions with your child.**

When you know what to look for, you'll be better prepared to have a productive conversation with their doctor.

If your child is old enough, answer the questions together.

**I first noticed my child's challenges with food at age \_\_\_\_\_ (months/years)**

**Has your child had trouble swallowing food recently?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**If they've had trouble swallowing food, how many times in the past week?**

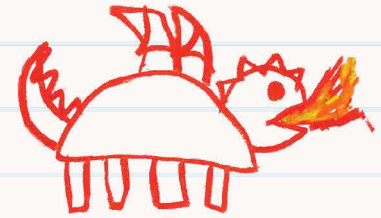
☐ 1 ☐ 2 to 6 ☐ 7 or more

**Do you feel their symptoms have impacted your day-to-day life, especially when it comes to eating?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Does your child avoid eating in social settings?**

☐ Yes ☐ No



**Check all the symptoms you've noticed with your child. Then underline the most common ones.**

- ☐ Food refusal and regurgitation
- ☐ Vomiting
- ☐ Heartburn/Acid reflux
- ☐ Difficulty swallowing
- ☐ Slow eating
- ☐ Excessive chewing
- ☐ Adding excessive sauces or liquids
- ☐ Uncooperative around food
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Failure to maintain weight and grow

**Ways I've tried to make eating easier for them:**

- ☐ Modifying food such as putting it in the blender
- ☐ Adding sauces or liquids to their food
- ☐ Avoiding or eliminating certain foods from their diet
- ☐ Giving them a lot to drink during meals
- ☐ Avoid giving them medications in pill or tablet form
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Write any other observations here.**

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# HOW DOES EATING MAKE YOUR CHILD FEEL?

Print this page so your child can circle the doodles that show how they feel. Or, they can use the doodles to inspire their own drawings about EoE!



USE THIS PAGE FOR YOUR OWN NOTES WHEN  
YOU MEET WITH YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR.



# COULD IT BE EoE?

WHEN mommy makes  
food it  
Burns



Ask your child's doctor about EoE



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