



## **EOSINOPHILIC ESOPHAGITIS/EOSINOPHILIC GASTROENTERITIS**

### **WHAT IS IT?**

- Immune cells called “eosinophils” collect in the gut lining, affecting gut function
  - The most common location is in the esophagus (eosinophilic esophagitis), the tube connecting the mouth and stomach
- It is believed that food allergy is a major cause of this problem, but other allergies, unknown triggers and heredity play a role

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

- Problems may differ depending upon the location in the gut where the eosinophils collect
- When the cells are in the esophagus the tube has trouble squeezing food to the stomach, leading to pain, and food getting stuck or going down slowly
  - Additional complaints may include: heartburn, poor appetite, needing to eat slowly, trouble swallowing, vomiting, poor growth
- Eosinophil cells collecting in other places (stomach, intestines) called eosinophilic gastroenteritis, lead to additional symptoms: poor appetite, diarrhea

### **HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?**

- The medical history gives your doctor clues to the diagnosis
- Diagnosis requires a gastroenterologist to look in the gut with a tube (endoscopy) and take samples (biopsies) to check for eosinophils
- Your doctor will consider other illnesses that can cause similar symptoms
- Various allergy tests may be performed to identify possible food triggers, but there are no simple, definitive tests.

### **HOW IS IT TREATED?**

- One treatment is to avoid the problem food(s) or other identified triggers
- Various diet trials (avoidance of several or many foods) may be needed followed by your doctor reviewing symptoms and possibly repeated biopsies. Sometimes special non-allergenic formulas are used.
- Additional medical treatments currently include steroids and antacid medications

### **WILL IT GO AWAY?**

- The long term course of the illness is not well understood but it appears to last for many years, sometimes with symptoms that improve and re-start later

### **WHAT SHOULD I ASK/TELL MY DOCTOR?**

- Let your doctor know of any new symptoms or worsening or continuation of symptoms
- Discuss making sure your child is getting a nutritious diet
- Discuss how and when to introduce additional foods, or about using medications

### **RESOURCES**

- This program has additional information sheets that you may find helpful
- Explore additional educational materials, for example, from Food Allergy Research & Education ([www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)) and American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders ([www.apfed.org](http://www.apfed.org))