

Esophagitis - Topic Overview by NOORUDDIN KHAN

What is esophagitis?

Esophagitis is irritation or inflammation of the [esophagus](#) 📷. The esophagus is the tube that carries food from your throat to your stomach. [Esophagitis](#) 📷 can be painful and can make it hard to swallow

What causes esophagitis?

[Gastroesophageal reflux disease](#), or GERD, is the most common cause of esophagitis. When you have GERD, stomach acid and juices flow backward into your esophagus. This can irritate the esophagus.

- [A hiatal hernia](#).
- Medicines that irritate the esophagus, such as:
 - [Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs \(NSAIDs\)](#), such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen.
 - Medicines for [osteoporosis](#) (bisphosphonates), such as alendronate, ibandronate, or risedronate.
 - [Antibiotics](#), such as clindamycin or tetracycline.
- Vitamin and mineral supplements, such as vitamin C, iron, and potassium pills.
- Infection. People who have a [weak immune system](#) are more likely to get esophagitis. This includes people with [HIV](#), [diabetes](#), or kidney problems, as well as older adults and people who take steroid medicine.
- [Radiation therapy](#).
- Certain diseases that make it hard to swallow, such as [scleroderma](#).
- Allergies, often food allergies, especially to seafood, milk, nuts, soy, or eggs.

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms of esophagitis include:

- Heartburn.
- Pain when you swallow.
- Trouble swallowing food or liquids.
- Chest pain (may be similar to the pain of a [heart attack](#)).
- A cough.

Sometimes it also causes:

- Nausea or vomiting.
- Fever.

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- Belly pain.

How is esophagitis diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and past health. He or she may do tests such as:

- An [endoscopy](#). During this test, the doctor puts a thin, flexible tube down your throat to look at your esophagus. This test also lets the doctor get a sample of the cells to test for infection. Sometimes a small piece of tissue is removed for a [biopsy](#). A biopsy is a test that checks for inflammation or cancer cells.
- A barium swallow. This is an X-ray of the throat and esophagus. Before the X-ray, you will drink a chalky liquid called barium. Barium coats the inside of your esophagus so that it shows up better on an X-ray.

How is it treated?

The treatment you need depends on what is causing the esophagitis. If you have esophagitis caused by [acid reflux](#) or GERD, your doctor will likely recommend that you change your diet, lose weight if needed, and make other lifestyle changes. Here are some things to try:

- Change your eating habits.
 - It's best to eat several small meals instead of two or three large meals.
 - After you eat, wait 2 to 3 hours before you lie down. Late-night snacks aren't a good idea.
 - Chocolate, mint, and alcohol can make GERD worse. They relax the valve between the esophagus and the stomach.
 - Spicy foods, foods that have a lot of acid (like tomatoes and oranges), and coffee can make GERD symptoms worse in some people. If your symptoms are worse after you eat a certain food, you may want to stop eating that food to see if your symptoms get better.
- Do not smoke or use smokeless tobacco.
- If you have GERD symptoms at night, raise the head of your bed 6 in. (15 cm) to 8 in. (20 cm) by putting the frame on blocks or placing a foam wedge under the head of your mattress. (Adding extra pillows does not work.)
- Do not wear tight clothing around your middle.
- Lose weight if you are overweight or obese. Losing just 5 to 10 pounds can help.