

EOE: Is It Why Your Child Won't Eat?

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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Imagine if your esophagus – the part of your body that carries food from your mouth to your stomach – felt itchy, irritated, or sore. It would be painful and would affect the way you eat. There is a condition called Eosinophilic esophagitis* - or EoE – that does just that. It is also known as the eczema of the food pipe.

EoE is the buildup of a type of white blood cell called eosinophils in the esophagus – something a healthy esophagus does not have.

If your child has unexplained eating or abdominal issues, the possibility of EoE is something to discuss with their doctor. According to Dr. Sandeep Gupta a lot of children with EoE also to have eczema, asthma, or allergies. The condition is seen in all ages, from infants to older people with an increasing awareness of it.

SOT Dr. Sandeep Gupta – Pediatric Gastroenterologist – OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois

(It is thought that about one in every 2,000 people has Eosinophilic Esophagitis. It's a relatively quiet common condition where your food pipe is irritated and generally there is difficulty eating with it. :16)

V/O: Dr. Gupta is a Pediatric Gastroenterologist with OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois in Peoria and has been treating the condition for more than 25 years.

He says symptoms of EoE can include difficulty swallowing, slow eating, preferring softer foods over harder ones, taking forever to eat, cutting their food into tiny bites, or drinking a lot of liquids to push the food down. That's how people with EoE cope with the condition because they think what they're feeling is just normal for them.

Diagnosing and treating the condition requires the expertise of a gastroenterologist and is a life-long process.

SOT Dr. Sandeep Gupta – Pediatric Gastroenterologist – OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois

(We think it's a chronic condition like blood pressure and diabetes – so it stays with you, that we know of. We have to do an endoscopy to diagnosis it and to treat it we use medications or diet changes because we think it's a food allergy or intolerance that's causing it, where the food pipe is getting irritated because of the food you are eating. :21)

V/O: To learn more about EoE, contact OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois at (309) 655-4069. There is also a free educational event in Peoria on October 25 at 6:30 PM. You can register [online](#).

Pronouncer: Eosinophilic (EE-oh-sin-OFF-ill-ick) esophagitis (EE-sof-ah-ji-tis)