



## **Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Diseases Basic Information**

### What are Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Diseases?

(a simplified explanation)

Eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases (EGIDs) are a set of diseases involving accumulation of eosinophils, an inflammatory white blood cell normally considered a circulating cell, in various segments of the gastrointestinal tract. These diseases include eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE) when eosinophils accumulate in excessive numbers in the esophagus; eosinophilic gastritis (EG) when eosinophils accumulate in excessive numbers in the stomach; eosinophilic colitis (EC) when eosinophils accumulate in excessive numbers in the colon; and eosinophilic gastroenteritis (EGE) when eosinophils accumulate in excessive numbers in multiple segments of the gastrointestinal tract, such as the stomach and intestine. These diseases cause chronic symptoms, such as pain, difficulty swallowing, vomiting, diarrhea, and weight loss. They can also deplete the body of iron and essential nutrients necessary for proper development and physical growth. These diseases are caused by immune responses to foods, often many different food groups, and are generally considered a form of chronic food allergy, distinct from anaphylaxis. Some people must rely on a simplified non-allergenic liquid formula or a feeding tube for their nutrition daily. People with these diseases will always feel isolated until there is a cure!

### Facts about Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Diseases:

- Affects adults and children – Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Diseases can strike at any age, often children and adolescents, but also adults. It is diagnosed by an endoscopy followed by analysis of biopsies under the microscope. [may want to link our animated video right here]
- Needs constant attention – People with an Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disease often take multiple medications daily, and some individuals may need to continually feed through a surgically placed feeding tube. Patients often undergo repeated endoscopies, which require anesthesia in children, and an endoscopy occurs every 90 days until the disease is well managed. Management of dietary restrictions is a daily challenge.
- No Cure – Though medication and diet restrictions allow a person with Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Diseases to feel better, there is no cure. If untreated, permanent damage to the gastrointestinal tract is possible.
- Difficult to manage – Despite paying rigorous attention to maintaining diet restrictions and taking the proper amount of medication, people with Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Diseases face many other factors that can adversely affect efforts to tightly control the disease. These factors include pain, stress, poor growth, physical activity, medications, illness/infection, and fatigue.
- Statistics – As many as 1 in 10,000 people have been diagnosed with an Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disease.

### What is it like to have an Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disease?

Ask patients that have been diagnosed with an Eosinophilic Disease, and they will tell you: It's difficult, It's upsetting, It's life altering, It never goes away. But, at the same time, people with Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Diseases serve as an inspiration by facing these diseases' challenges with courage and perseverance and don't let these conditions stand in the way of achieving their goals.