

Diffuse Esophageal Spasms (DES)

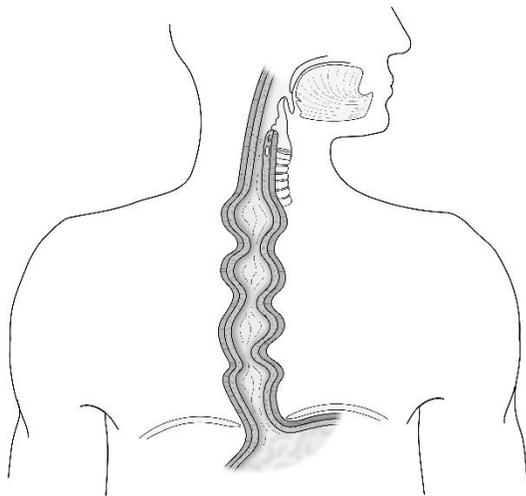
Diffuse esophageal spasm is when muscle spasms shut and close the esophagus.

Symptoms

The spasms can lead to a feeling of food sticking, food blocking, vomiting, and chest pain. Symptoms may be worse with cold foods or drinks. The feeling may improve with warm liquids.

At least 2 tests are needed to diagnose:

- Endoscopy: sedated exam with a flexible camera scope to assess the esophagus.
- Esophageal manometry: a tube passed through the nose that measures muscle strength in the esophagus and looks for spasms.



There is no cure, though most cases become stable or improve with treatment. About 1 in 10 cases can worsen. These patients need surgery.

Treatment

- Treat acid reflux with medicine that controls acid (PPI) and anti-reflux.
- Drink warm liquids with meals for trouble swallowing and chest pain.
- If trouble swallowing or food sticking is the main symptom, you can try medicine to relax the muscles.
- If chest pain is the main symptom, you can take medicine to control the nerve sensations.
- Change eating habits. Eat softer and more liquid foods. These foods will tend to slide down easier. Problem foods such as grisly meats, dry foods, or raw vegetables and fruits should be eaten with care.
- In rare cases, surgery is needed.

Follow Up

Follow up depends on the treatment program. In most cases, follow up will be 3 months after starting medicines. Patients need to track any trouble with eating, drinking, and changes in weight, chest pain, or vomiting.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7846