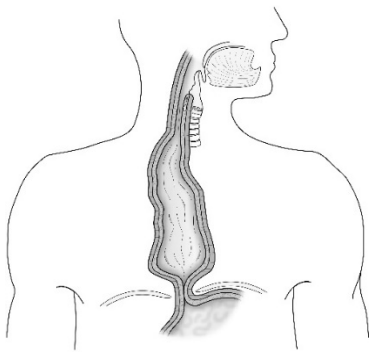


Achalasia

Achalasia is when the esophagus doesn't move food and fluid into the stomach. This can cause food and liquid to build up in the esophagus. There is no cure and symptoms get worse without treatment. Early treatment can help prevent problems. Without treatment, you may lose weight, have trouble taking medicine, or become dehydrated.



Symptoms

Symptoms include:

- Chest fullness
- Food sticking
- Food coming back up into the throat
- Vomiting

Tests

We use 3 tests to diagnose achalasia:

- **Endoscopy:** We use a thin, flexible camera to look inside the esophagus.
- **Esophageal manometry:** We place a tube through the nose to measure how well the esophagus muscles work.
- **Barium esophagram:** You swallow barium, and an x-ray shows how well the esophagus empties.

Treatment

Treatment focuses on opening the lower esophageal valve so food can move into the stomach. Treatment options include:

- **Laparoscopic surgery:** This involves making small cuts to open the tight muscle at the lower esophageal valve.
- **Endoscopic myotomy (POEM):** This involves placing a scope through the mouth to open the valve.
- **Balloon dilation:** This involves stretching the valve with a balloon using an endoscope. If surgery is not an option,
- **Botulinum toxin (Botox) injection:** This involves injecting Botox into the valve to help relax the muscle.

Diet

Diet changes may also help make swallowing easier.

- Choose liquids or soft foods that move more easily.
- Be careful when you eat problem foods such as tough meats, dry foods, or raw fruits and vegetables.
- Eat several small liquid or semi-liquid meals during the day.
- **Avoid** large meals.

Follow-up Visit

Follow-up care depends on your treatment plan. In most cases, we schedule a follow-up visit about 3 months after treatment. Before your visit, track when you have:

- Trouble eating or drinking
- Weight changes
- Chest pain
- Food coming back up into the throat

