Can you say EOSINOPHILIC? (E-O-sin-O-fill-ik)

Now you can say it, but what does it mean?

Eosinophils are a type of white blood cell that play an important part of our immune system. Eosinophils help us fight off certain types of infections, such as parasites.

Many different problems can cause high numbers of eosinophils in the blood including allergies (food and environmental), certain infections (caused by parasites), eosinophil-associated gastrointestinal disorders, leukemia, and other problems.

When a person has elevated numbers of eosinophils in their digestive system, tissues, organs, and/or bloodstream, without a known cause, he or she may have an eosinophil-associated disease.

The diagnosis depends on where the eosinophils are found:

- Eosinophilic Cystitis: bladder
- Eosinophilic Fasciitis: connective tissue
- Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disorders:
  - Eosinophilic Colitis: large intestine
  - Eosinophilic Esophagitis: esophagus
  - Eosinophilic Gastritis: stomach
  - Eosinophilic Gastroenteritis: stomach and small intestine
- Eosinophilic Granulomatosis with Polyangiitis, aka Churg-Strauss Syndrome: lungs, sinuses, heart, various organ systems
- Eosinophilic Pneumonia: lungs
- Hypereosinophilic Syndrome: blood and any organ

Eosinophil-associated diseases are rare, but they are an emerging healthcare problem around the globe.

These diseases are chronic and require long term management. The symptoms may be debilitating and often lead to missed time at school and work, and may greatly impact a patient’s quality of life.

Learn more at www.apfed.org.