Eosinophil Associated Disorders

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Eosinophils (ee-oh-sin-oh-fils) are a type of white blood cell that are part of our immune system. Many different problems can cause a person to have higher-than average numbers of eosinophils in the blood, including allergies (food and environmental), certain infections (caused by parasites), eosinophil-associated gastrointestinal disorders, leukemia, and other problems.

Typically, eosinophils make up less than 5% of circulating white blood cells in healthy individuals and can vary over time in healthy individuals. 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 high numbers of eosinophils cause inflammation and damage to surrounding tissue and organs.

The diagnosis depends on where the eosinophils are found:

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

What Should I Know About Eosinophil-associated Disorders?

- Eosinophil-associated diseases are chronic conditions requiring long-term treatment with no known cure
- Symptoms may be debilitating for some, leading to missed work, school, social outings
- Delays in diagnosis are common
- Often tissue biopsies are needed in the diagnosis process

Where Can I Learn More?

The American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders (APFED) is a 501(c)3 non-profit advocacy organization for those living with eosinophilic disorders. APFED educates and raises awareness of these conditions, advocates for the unmet needs of patients, and advances research through its HOPE on the Horizon Research Program and through collaborations. APFED also supports peer-to-peer engagement through its online support community on the Inspire Network, community events, and its annual patient education conference. For more information, visit apfed.org.