

Esophagitis Caused by Radiation Treatment

The esophagus is the tube that carries food from your throat to your stomach. Esophagitis is the inflammation of the esophagus. It is often a side effect of radiation treatment to the chest area or the esophagus. It is an unpleasant, but temporary side effect of radiation therapy. Esophagitis can be painful and can make it hard to swallow.

Esophagitis feels like an internal sunburn and usually develops 2 to 3 weeks after beginning treatment. Once treatment is completed, it usually resolves within 2 to 4 weeks.

Signs and Symptoms

- Pain and/or difficulty swallowing
- Sore throat
- Feeling of food getting stuck on the way down
- Hoarseness
- Chest pain
- Heartburn
- Cough
- Nausea
- Acid reflux or indigestion
- Vomiting

Tips for Managing Symptoms

Things to Avoid	Do This Instead
Eating very hot or cold foods.	Eat puddings, custards and high-protein smoothies.
Drinking alcohol and carbonated beverages.	Drink Ensure [®] or Boost [®] .
Eating spicy foods.	Eat bland, soft foods such as mashed potatoes, eggs, ice cream, milk shakes.
Eating nuts or dry foods.	Cut foods into small pieces and chew thoroughly before swallowing.
Drinking acidic juices or eat acidic fruits (such as tomatoes and oranges).	Drink plenty of cool liquids.

Your doctor may prescribe Magic Mouth Wash. This is a liquid medicine that helps numb the esophagus and reduce pain when eating.

Patient Education



Have your meal and drink prepared and ready before taking this medicine. Take the medicine at least 5 minutes before eating. Use a straw to take the medicine. Place the straw as far back in the throat as you can tolerate it. The goal is to numb the esophagus, not your mouth. The medicine numbs your esophagus for about 30 minutes