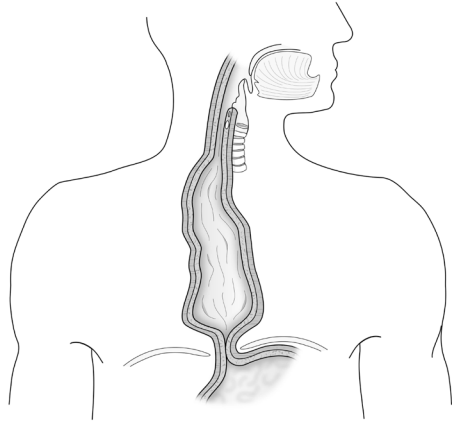


## Achalasia

### What is achalasia?

Achalasia is when the esophagus fails to empty food and fluid into the stomach. This leads to the buildup of food and fluid in the esophagus.



### What are the symptoms?

If symptoms are not treated, patients can have weight loss, trouble taking medicines, and dehydration. Symptoms include:

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

### How is it diagnosed?

We use 3 tests:

- **Endoscopy:** A flexible camera scope is used to look at the esophagus.
- **Esophageal manometry:** A nasal tube that measures muscle strength of the esophagus.
- **Barium esophagram:** An x-ray when barium is swallowed to show if the esophagus empties.

### Is there a cure?

There is no cure. Symptoms will worsen without treatment. Early treatment can help.

### What is the treatment?

Treatment includes:

1. **Opening the lower esophageal valve.**  
The best way to do this is through laparoscopic surgery or endoscopic myotomies (POEMs). If surgery is not an option, then balloon disruption using endoscope or inject of botulinum toxin (Botox) into the valve.
2. **Changing your diet.** Choose foods that pass more easily down the esophagus like liquids or soft foods. Eat problem foods like grisly meats, dry foods, or raw vegetables and fruits with care. Eat several small volume liquid or semi-liquid meals throughout the day and avoid large meals.

### Follow Up

Follow up depends on the treatment program. In most cases follow up will be 3 months after treatment. Patients need to track their trouble with eating and drinking, changes in weight, chest pain, or food coming back up into the throat.