



## Press release

### Have difficulty swallowing food?

Freiburg, May 10, 2022

**Difficulty swallowing and pain while eating may be warning signs of eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE). EoE is a chronic inflammatory disease of the esophagus that primarily affects men between the ages of 30 and 50. The first-ever European EoE Day will be held on May 22, 2022 to raise awareness of this disease.**

For over 60 years, Dr. Falk Pharma GmbH has been developing and marketing innovative medicines to treat diseases of the liver, gallbladder, gut, and the esophagus, including rare diseases such as eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE). As part of the first-ever European EoE Day on May 22, 2022, a wide array of educational programs and activities are being launched to raise awareness about this little-known disease among the general public.

#### **What is eosinophilic esophagitis?**

Eosinophilic esophagitis is a disease of chronic inflammation ("-itis") of the esophagus. The inflammation of the esophagus is characterized by infiltration with a specific type of white blood cells called eosinophils, giving the condition its name "eosinophilic esophagitis". It is still not fully clear what causes the disease or how it develops.

#### **What are the typical symptoms of EoE?**

The hallmark symptom of EoE in adults is difficulty swallowing, which can even lead to food becoming stuck in the throat. This symptom often drives patients to develop strategies to avoid this discomfort, such as eating very slowly, washing down food with lots of liquids, pureeing their foods in a blender, avoiding specific foods, and rarely or never going out to eat. EoE must be taken very seriously as it progresses if left untreated, increasingly impacting the proper function of the esophagus. This can lead to food morsels becoming lodged in the throat, which sometimes requires an emergency endoscopy to remove the stuck food.

#### **How is EoE diagnosed?**

A doctor specializing in digestive medicine (a gastroenterologist) is required to diagnose eosinophilic esophagitis. The gastroenterologist reviews the patient's reported symptoms and also performs an endoscopy, a procedure that looks into the esophagus using a flexible tube with an attached camera and which also allows tissue samples (biopsies) to be collected. Patients with EoE often have signs of chronic inflammation in their esophagus. However, the essential feature of the disease is an increased number of eosinophils in the biopsy of the mucosal tissue.

#### **What treatments are available for EoE?**

There are currently three different treatment options for EoE: medications (corticosteroids or proton pump inhibitors), diets which eliminate certain food allergens (foods which trigger an allergic reaction), and a surgical procedure to widen the esophagus during an endoscopy. The procedure to widen the esophagus is called a dilation.



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### Why is EoE classified as a rare disease?

Across Europe as a whole, there are “only” an average of 29 cases of EoE per 100,000 individuals, which classifies it as a rare disease. However, there is a large geographical variation within this average, and moreover about 80% of EoE patients are men. Although the disease can start at any age, the majority of patients are diagnosed between the ages of 30 and 50.

Eosinophilic esophagitis is a relatively “recent” disease, having only been first reported as a unique condition in 1993. It has received growing attention by the medical field since the 2000s and is now thought to be the second-most common esophageal disease following reflux disease. Nonetheless, EoE is often overlooked in patients with esophageal symptoms or misdiagnosed as another esophageal disorder (such as reflux disease). These hurdles can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment, increasing patients’ suffering and allowing the disease to progress.

### European EoE Day on May 22, 2022

The first-ever Europe-wide EoE Day to raise awareness for this rare disease is an initiative by several different patient organizations in Spain, France, and Italy. The day intends to spread the word about EoE through events, videos, and a #BlenderChallenge.

More information about the EoE Day can be found at <https://europeaneoeday.org/de/home/>

More details on EoE are available at <https://drfalkpharma.com/en/indications/eosinophilic-esophagitis/>

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#### EoE Day

The first-ever Europe-wide EoE Day to raise awareness for eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE) will be held on May 22, 2022



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### Difficulty swallowing

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### About Dr. Falk Pharma GmbH

Dr. Falk Pharma GmbH has been developing and marketing innovative medicines to treat a wide range of gastrointestinal disorders like inflammatory bowel disease or eosinophilic esophagitis as well as hepatobiliary disorders such as primary biliary cholangitis for over 60 years. As the international experts in digestive and metabolic medicine, the company brings together physicians, scientists, and patients to devise new and powerful approaches to patient care. Dr. Falk Pharma engages in pre-clinical and clinical stage research that aims to meaningfully improve therapeutic practice as well as patient health and well-being. A family-owned business with a global presence, Dr. Falk Pharma has ten affiliates in Europe and Australia and is continuously growing. The company has its headquarters and R&D facilities in Freiburg, Germany, its pharmaceutical products are manufactured in Europe, mainly at sites in Germany, France and Switzerland. Dr. Falk Pharma GmbH employs approximately 990 individuals globally and 218 in Freiburg.

Further information on Dr. Falk Pharma can be found online: [www.dr-falk-pharma.com](http://www.dr-falk-pharma.com)

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