

Patient Information **Esophageal Spasm**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The chest is a busy cavity in the body with lots of organs behind the breast bone. We usually think of heart pains when that area hurts, however pain can also result from the muscles, the lungs, the sac around the heart or the digestive system.
- The esophagus sits directly behind the heart and can cause similar chest pains.
- This usually results from the reflux of acidic particles from the stomach upwards into the esophagus.
- These particles can cause the esophagus, which has muscle in it, to spasm.

SYMPTOMS

- Patients usually feel a chest tightness after meals or when laying flat.
- Discomfort can last for 20+ minutes in duration.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- Testing is usually a trial of certain medications to see if they reduce the pain.
- Sometimes, an endoscopy is used to get clues. An endoscopy involves a camera that goes into the esophagus for a direct view and gathers tissue samples.

TREATMENT

- Medications are the mainstay of treatment.
- There are multiple medications available, including some that suppress acid in the stomach from forming and others that relax the muscle in the esophagus.

FOR MORE INFORMATION or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at www.highlandheart.urmc.edu