

# Esophageal phase of Swallowing Disorders

## Definition:

It is an inability to swallow food and liquids through the esophagus into the stomach as a result of mechanical obstruction, a motility disorder or impaired opening of the lower esophageal sphincter.

## Clinical features:

- 1- Sensation of food sticking in the chest area or throat
- 2- Difficulty swallowing solid food
- 3- Heartburn
- 4- Drooling
- 5- Regurgitation
- 6- Unexplained weight loss
- 7- Change in dietary habits

## Causes:

### 1) Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD):

- \* It is an excessive backflow of stomach contents into the esophagus.
- \* Clinical features →
  - Heartburn,
  - Regurgitation,
  - Acid indigestion and
  - A bitter or sour taste in the mouth.

### 2) Achalasia:

- \* Achalasia is an esophageal motility disorder which is characterized by delayed food passage through the esophagus due to loses its ability to contract in a sequential manner.
- \* Clinical features: →
  - Patients with achalasia feel that food gets stuck in their throat or chest
  - Severe regurgitation of backflow of material out of the esophagus into the pharynx.
  - Pharyngeal burning sensation
  - Frequent gagging or coughing
  - Aspiration
  - Weight loss.

### 3) Tracheoesophageal Fistula:

- \* It is an abnormal opening between the trachea and esophagus, which is usually located at the level of 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> thoracic vertebrae.
- \* Clinical features: →
  - Coughing after the swallow.
  - The food material flow back into the trachea.

### 4) Zenker's Diverticulum:

- \* It is an abnormal sac in the pharyngeal muscular wall in the area of cricopharyngeal region formed due to the pharyngeal muscle herniation.

- \* Clinical features: →
  - Dysphagia
  - Regurgitation of undigested food hours after eating
  - Feeling of food sticking in the throat
  - Coughing after eating
  - Aspiration of food and liquid into the airways
  - Unexplained weight loss
  - Bad breath
  - Gurgling noises in the neck
- \* Radiography shows diverticulum as a round balloon fill of radiopaque material as the patient swallow.

