

**DEFINITION**

1. **Oesophagitis** is an inflammation of the lining of the oesophagus resulting from reflux of the acid contents of the stomach into the oesophagus.

**CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS**

2. The commonest symptom is burning retrosternal pain which is aggravated by stooping, lying or sitting in a slumped posture, and eased by sitting upright and alkalis. The pain may simulate angina, spreading through to the back and down the arms.
3. As the inflammation of the oesophagus becomes established, the pain is aggravated by hot and spicy food and drinks and alcohol. Intermittent dysphagia may occur as a result of oesophageal spasm and oedema. Regurgitation of a bitter fluid into the mouth is a common feature.

**AETIOLOGY**

4. Oesophagitis may be –
  - 4.1. **acute**, following burns, scalds or infections of the oesophagus.
  - 4.2. **chronic**, due to reflux of gastric juices.
5. Oesophagitis may occur in the absence of any anatomical changes or predisposing factors and in these cases is due to a disorder of oesophageal motility.
6. Hiatus hernia is the commonest cause of oesophagitis, the aetiology then being that of the hiatus hernia.
7. Obesity and smoking are known to cause oesophagitis, as are fatty foods and caffeine.
8. Oesophagitis may occur as a result of duodenal ulceration and gallstones, the aetiology then being that of the underlying condition.
9. Heavy lifting and straining may initiate oesophagitis due to increased intra-abdominal pressure causing reflux of gastric juices.
10. Oesophagitis also occurs, usually as a temporary phenomenon, during pregnancy.

**CONCLUSION**

11. Oesophagitis is an inflammation of the lining of the oesophagus which may be a primary disorder of motility or secondary to factors listed above.

## REFERENCES

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