

GI Update 2014
Approach to Dysphagia Small Group Session

A 28 year old man describes intermittent dysphagia for solid foods. Bulky foods like meat are the typical items that will cause a sensation of “sticking” in the esophagus, referred to the sternal notch. Usually he is able to wash the bolus down with gulps of water, but last weekend at a steakhouse a piece of steak became impacted in the esophagus and he was unable to swallow water or even saliva. His wife drove him to the ER, but the bolus spontaneously passed in the waiting room and he left without being seen.

He denies heartburn or weight loss. He has mild exercise induced asthma and uses Ventolin when playing sports, but is on no other medications.

Q1) What is your differential diagnosis for dysphagia in this patient?

Q2) What investigations would you order for this patient?

Q3) What are the risk factors for this condition?

Q4) How is the diagnosis made?

Q5) What treatment options are available for this condition?

Q6) The patient wants to know if his condition can be treated with diet. What do you tell him?