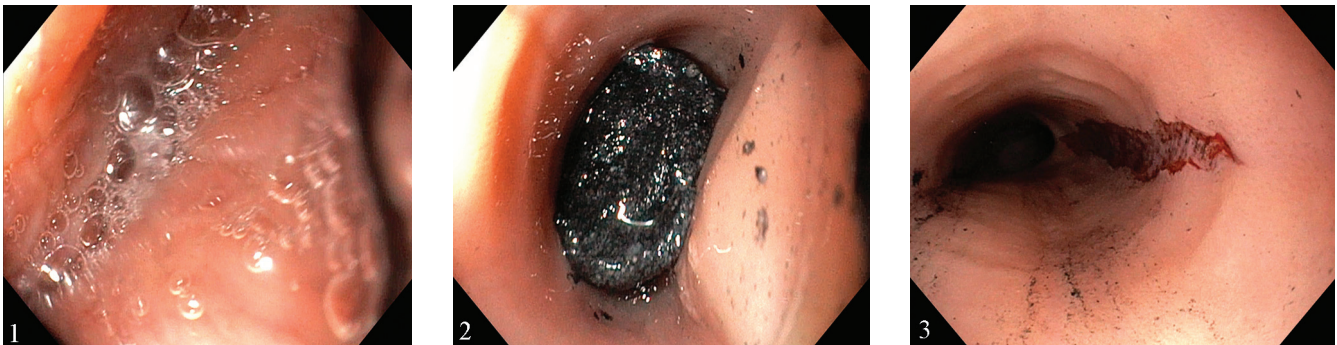


# Endoscopic Black Hole: A Case of a Charcoal Tablet impacted in the Esophagus

Francesco Cocomazzi, Rossella Cubisino, Marco Gentile, Francesco Perri

Division of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy, Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza Hospital, IRCCS, San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy



A 16-year-old girl arrived at our Emergency Department for an oropharyngeal foreign body sensation, with dysphagia, pharyngodynia and marked sialorrhea. She reported that the symptoms would gradually get worse after her last meal (about 18 hours before).

The otorhinolaryngologist excluded noteworthy alterations, except for marked salivation (Fig. 1). The chest X-ray was negative and an esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD) was performed. After crossing the cricopharynx, a “black hole” appearance was observed. Through a gently pushing and continuous insufflation (Fig. 2), the FB was moved into the stomach. During the withdrawal of the instrument, a five centimeters defect of the mucosal layer with self-limiting bloody groaning was highlighted in the middle esophagus (Fig. 3).

After the examination, the patient reported a vegetable charcoal tablet ingestion the day before due to a swollen abdomen sensation, a detail omitted during the first anamnesis. No symptoms attributable to a previous history of food impaction or esophageal dysmotility were described. The follow up EGD excluded eosinophilic esophagitis.

Charcoal is used for various purposes. Thanks to its adsorbent properties, it can bind substances and gases to prevent their absorption or accumulation in the intestinal

tract. For this reason, it is often used in case of poisoning, meteorism, diarrhea, dyslipidemia, cholestatic disorders and chronic kidney disease [1].

As recently reported, food/drug impaction is increasing in incidence. Although underlying causes are very often highlighted, there are cases whose etiology remains unknown [2].

We think this case, unique in the literature, demonstrates how charcoal, thanks to its nature, impacting a more restricted area, had increased in size by completely occluding the lumen of the esophagus due to the continuous intake of fluids to eliminate the FB sensation.

**Corresponding author:** Francesco Cocomazzi,  
francescococomazzi@gmail.com

**Conflicts of interest:** None to declare.

## REFERENCES

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