

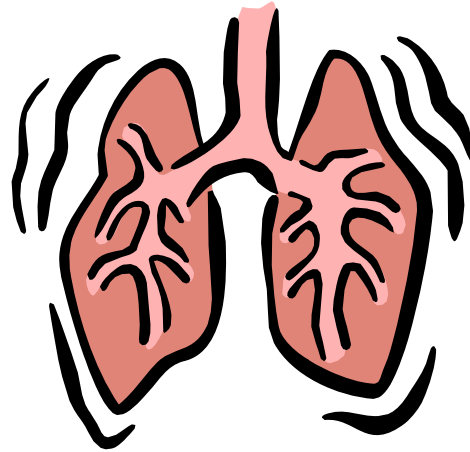


Pulmonary Sarcoidosis

What is sarcoidosis?

Sarcoidosis is a disorder that can affect many parts of the body. The most common tissues that sarcoidosis affects include:

- lungs
- lymph nodes
- skin
- eyes
- liver
- spleen.



The lungs are affected in more than 90% of cases. This is known as pulmonary sarcoidosis. Sarcoidosis causes inflammation of body tissues. It also causes lumps of cells to form in the organs. These lumps are known as granulomas.

What causes sarcoidosis?

The cause of sarcoidosis is not known. Over the years, there have been changing ideas about what may cause sarcoidosis. One theory is that sarcoidosis develops when a person is exposed to a certain unknown toxin in the environment or workplace.

Who is at risk for sarcoidosis?

Anyone can develop sarcoidosis. It affects people from every race, sex, and age. Sarcoidosis is most common in people between the ages of 20 and 40. It is also more common in women. Sarcoidosis is most common in people of African-American and Scandinavian origin. It is not contagious.

What are the symptoms?

Many people who have sarcoidosis do not have any symptoms, whatsoever. Some people may experience symptoms that are common in other diseases. These symptoms include a low grade fever, feeling tired, having trouble sleeping, and weight loss.

Symptoms that may be present when sarcoidosis affects the lungs include:

- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Dry cough

- Chest pain

Other symptoms of sarcoidosis include bumps or sores on the skin, as well as enlarged lymph nodes. Sarcoidosis can cause visual problems like blurred vision, burning and redness of the eyes, and seeing black spots.

How does sarcoidosis progress?

Sarcoidosis can range from mild to severe.

With mild sarcoidosis, a person may develop swelling of the body tissues and grow lumps of cells, called granulomas that grow initially but can shrink or stop growing, altogether. Often in mild cases of sarcoidosis, the symptoms may disappear entirely, within a few years.

When a person has severe sarcoidosis, it continues to worsen over time. This form of sarcoidosis can cause organ damage that cannot be reversed. The disease may leave scar tissue in the lungs. It may be harder for a person to breathe, because scar tissue makes the lungs stiff and harder to fill with air. Treatment is helpful in severe cases.

How is sarcoidosis diagnosed?

A diagnosis of sarcoidosis can be made when other possible causes are ruled out. There is not a specific test that is used to diagnose sarcoidosis. To look for signs of sarcoidosis, a health care provider is likely to start by taking a medical history and by performing a complete physical exam.

Some tests that may be used to arrive at a diagnosis include a chest x-ray, lung function tests, or a tissue biopsy. A tissue biopsy might be done, to look at lung cells under a microscope. A CT scan of the chest and blood tests may also be performed.

How is sarcoidosis treated?

People, who need treatment, are given medication to reduce inflammation of the body tissues. People are also given treatment to slow the growth of granulomas. Treatment also promotes good function of the lungs, helps prevent organ damage and helps reduce symptoms of sarcoidosis.

Sarcoidosis is most often treated with corticosteroids, such as prednisone.



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