

# THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SARCOIDOSIS

In the Clinic  
Annals of Internal Medicine

## What is sarcoidosis?

- A disease causing small patches of inflamed cells (granulomas) to form, usually in the lungs but sometimes in other parts of the body.
- The cause is unknown.

## Who gets it?

- Risk for sarcoidosis may be higher if a close family member has it.
- It tends to affect young adults between 20 and 40 years of age.
- African Americans and northern European whites are at higher risk.
- Sarcoidosis is not contagious.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

- Fatigue, weight loss, and unexplained fever.
- Dry cough, mild chest pain, and shortness of breath.
- Red, sore eyes.
- Scaly rash or red bumps on skin.
- Sore, swollen muscles and abnormal heart rhythms.
- Changes in memory or mental sharpness.

## How is it diagnosed?

- Your doctor will perform a careful physical examination and ask questions about your symptoms and family medical history.
- A chest x-ray may show scarring or granulomas in the lungs.
- Breathing tests may show restricted breathing capacity.
- Tests may include blood or urine testing, computed tomography (CT scan), electrocardiogram (EKG), an eye examination, and skin biopsy or tissue sampling.

## How is it treated?

- Sarcoidosis often occurs for only a short time and heals without treatment.
- Corticosteroids, such as prednisone, are commonly prescribed if treatment is needed.
- A pulmonary rehabilitation program can help reduce symptoms.
- If sarcoidosis is severe, you may need to be hospitalized until your condition is stabilized.
- In rare cases, sarcoidosis damage is severe enough that lung transplantation or a pacemaker or implantable defibrillator is needed.

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## For More Information

[www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/sarcoidosis/](http://www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/sarcoidosis/)  
Information on sarcoidosis from the American Lung Association.

[www.stopsarcoidosis.org/](http://www.stopsarcoidosis.org/)  
[www.stopsarcoidosis.org/patientresources/doctor.htm](http://www.stopsarcoidosis.org/patientresources/doctor.htm)  
Information on sarcoidosis, including advice on talking to your doctor, from the Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research.

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sarc/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sarc/)  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-spanish/health-topics/temas/sarc/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-spanish/health-topics/temas/sarc/)  
Patient handout titled "What is sarcoidosis?" from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, in English and Spanish.

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