

Introduction

Myositis is a type of disease that causes inflammation in the muscles. Myositis can cause pain and weakness. This can make it hard to do normal activities like walking and standing.

This reference summary explains myositis. It talks about the symptoms and causes of the disorder. It also explains how myositis is diagnosed and treated.

Anatomy

Some of the body's muscles are voluntary and others involuntary. Voluntary muscles move when your brain tells them to move. Involuntary muscles work without your brain having to tell them to work. They do things like help your body move food through the intestines and focus your eyes. Myositis affects the voluntary muscles, which are also called skeletal muscles. The skeletal muscles allow us to walk, run, write and play.



Symptoms

There are three different kinds of myositis:

- Dermatomyositis, or DM.
- Polymyositis, or PM.
- Inclusion body myositis, or IBM.

Inflammation is when body tissue becomes red, swollen and painful. All types of myositis cause muscle inflammation. But symptoms can be different for each type of myositis.



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Dermatomyositis, or DM, affects the skin as well as the muscles. People with DM can develop skin rashes. These rashes are usually red, purple and patchy. Skin rashes caused by DM usually start on the eyelids. The rash can spread to the face, chest, arms and legs.



Other symptoms of DM include:

- Weight loss.
- Fever.
- Inflamed lungs.
- Sensitivity to light.

People with DM sometimes develop calcium deposits in their muscles. Calcium deposits appear as hard bumps under the skin.

Polymyositis, or PM, causes muscle pain and weakness that starts in the proximal muscles. Proximal muscles are muscles in the trunk of the body. Eventually, the pain and weakness can spread to muscles in the arms and legs. PM can make it hard to climb stairs, stand up or lift objects.

Other symptoms of PM include:

- Shortness of breath.
- Difficulty swallowing or speaking.
- Arrhythmias.

Arrhythmias cause the heart to beat with an abnormal rhythm.

Inclusion body myositis, or IBM, usually affects people over the age of 50. IBM causes muscle weakness that starts and worsens gradually. IBM can affect only one side of the body. It can make it difficult to grip objects. IBM can also cause trouble swallowing.



Causes

No one is sure what causes myositis. Some health care providers believe that viruses can trigger myositis. Certain drugs may lead to myositis. Recent research suggests that genetic factors also may contribute to myositis. Genes are parts of DNA that determine characteristics in individual people.

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Diagnosis

Your health care provider will ask you about any symptoms you may have. He or she will perform a physical exam and ask you about your personal and family medical history. Your health care provider may run blood tests.

Your health care provider may request a muscle biopsy. A muscle biopsy takes a small piece of muscle tissue to check for inflammation or damage. He or she may use an MRI to check for inflammation in the muscles. MRI, or magnetic resonance imaging, uses radio waves and a powerful magnet to create detailed pictures of the inside of the body.



Treatment

Lifelong treatment can help people affected by the disorder live happy, full lives. Treatment for myositis depends on what type of myositis you have. There are no standard treatments for IBM. But physical therapy may help with mobility. Your health care provider may recommend medication to treat DM and PM.

Other treatments that may help with the symptoms of DM or PM include:

- Physical therapy.
- Exercise.
- Rest.
- Heat therapy, which uses heat on affected muscles to relieve pain and stiffness.



Assistive devices, such as canes and walkers, may help with mobility. Certain ointments may help with the skin rashes caused by DM. Talk to your health care provider about what ointment may work for you.

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Summary

Myositis is a type disease that causes inflammation in the muscles. Myositis can cause pain and weakness. This can make it hard to do normal activities like walking and standing.

There are three different kinds of myositis:

- Dermatomyositis, which affects the muscles and skin.
- Polymyositis, which affects muscles on both sides of the body that help you move.
- Inclusion body myositis, which usually affects older people.

Symptoms depend on the type of myositis you have. Lifelong treatment for myositis depends on what type of myositis you have. Treatment can help you live a happy and full life.



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