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## Sarcoidosis

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### What is sarcoidosis?

With sarcoidosis, swollen nodules or lumps grow in different parts of the body. This happens most often in the lungs, lymph nodes, eyes, skin, liver and spleen.

It is not cancer and it is not contagious. Many people get better with no treatment. Some people get chronic lung, heart or kidney problems.

Anyone can get sarcoidosis but it is more common in women between the ages of 20 to 40.

People with sarcoidosis can usually keep on working.

### What causes sarcoidosis?

The cause is not known. Researchers think that breathing something in the environment causes the immune system to start making the swollen nodules as a way to getting the toxin out of the body.

The swollen nodules themselves are not harmful. However, they can cause problems with the way the lungs, lymph nodes, eyes or liver usually work.

### What are the symptoms?

When sarcoidosis is in the lungs, there may be no symptoms. The doctor may see sarcoidosis on a chest X-ray that was taken for another reason.

You may have shortness of breath, cough, chest pain or a feeling of chest heaviness. Other symptoms include rash, joint pain, enlarged lymph glands and sore eyes.

## **How is sarcoidosis diagnosed?**

When sarcoidosis is in the lungs it shows up on a chest X-ray. Breathing tests, blood tests, a cardiogram and CT scan may also be done. A bronchoscopy may be done to test a sample of tissue as well.

## **How is sarcoidosis treated?**

There is no cure. Sarcoidosis usually runs its course and may take a few years. Most often, sarcoidosis heals on its own.

When the problem causes trouble breathing or coughing, the doctor may prescribe a corticosteroid type medication such as prednisone. This may help stop swelling and reduce the nodules.

Corticosteroid medications may cause side effects such as puffy face and stomach problems. These side effects go away when the medication is stopped.

It is important to be followed by the doctor to try and prevent long-term problems.