

CALGARY VASCULITIS ASSOCIATION

WHAT IS VASCULITIS?

Vasculitis is defined as an inflammation of the blood vessels, arteries, veins or capillaries. When this inflammation occurs, it changes the walls of the blood vessels, such as weakening and narrowing them. This can progress to the point where the blood vessel becomes blocked. As a result of vasculitis the tissues and organs that are supplied by the affected blood vessels do not get enough blood. This lack of blood can cause organ and tissue damage that can lead to death.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms vary from patient to patient and are dependent on the type of vasculitis. Common symptoms often include a combination of the following:

- Fatigue/Weakness
- Chronic sinusitis/ nasal allergies
- Lung inflammation
- Asthma
- Joint pain
- Abdominal pain/ Gastrointestinal bleeding
- Kidney problems
- Nerve problems (numbness, weakness, pain)
- Vision changes
- Skin lesions/rashes
- Fever
- Atypical severe headache

CAUSE

The exact cause of vasculitis is generally unknown. Often a combination of factors can cause the inflammatory process to begin. Research suggests that people probably develop vasculitis because of the complex interaction of their genetic inheritance, and exposure to chemicals in the environment or possibly some types of infection (including hepatitis B virus) which may trigger the vasculitis in someone who is susceptible.

DIAGNOSIS

Vasculitis is diagnosed by clinical and laboratory findings such as, blood tests, radiographic imaging and other tests. A tissue biopsy is the most definitive test.

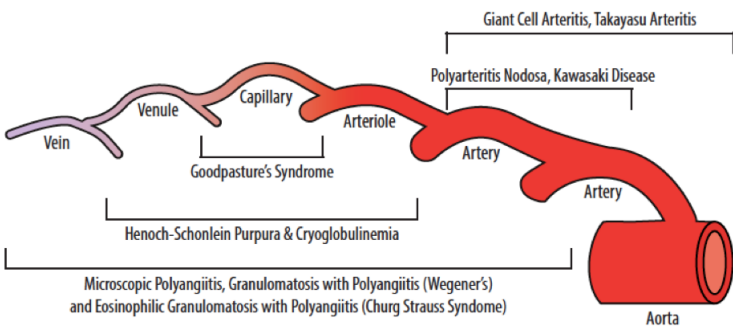
TREATMENT

Treatment depends on the severity and symptoms along with the patients general health. It can include corticosteroids, immunosuppressives drugs and antibiotics. Other treatments may also be used.

OTHER FACTS ABOUT VASCULITIS

Vasculitis can affect people of all ages and races, although some forms may be more common among certain age or ethnic groups.

The different types of vasculitis are classified according to the size and location of the blood vessels affected - Small, Medium, Large. The most serious types of vasculitis involve both small and medium-sized arteries.



TYPES OF VASCULITIS (BY SIZE OF ARTERIES AFFECTED)

Vasculitis Mainly Affecting Large Arteries

- Giant Cell Arteritis/Temporal Arteritis (GCA)
- Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR)
- Takayasu Arteritis (TA)
- Aortitis

Vasculitis Mainly Affecting Middle Size Arteries

- Polyarteritis Nodosa (PAN)
- Kawasaki Disease (KD)

Vasculitis Affecting The Small Blod Vessel

- Eosinophilic Granulomatosis with Polyangiitis (EGPA)
- Microscopic Polyangiitis (MPA)
- Granulomatosis with Polyangiitis (GPA)
- Henoch-Schönlein Purpura (HSP)
- Good Pasture's Syndrome
- Urticarial Vasculitis

Less Common Vasculitides

- Behçet's Disease (BD)
- Buerger's Disease
- Central Nervous System Vasculitis (CNS)
- Cogan Syndrome
- Cryoglobulinemia and cryoglobulinemic Vasculitis
- Hypersensitivity Vasculitis (HSV)
- Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

Contact Us:

Calgary Vasculitis Association

Email: info@calgaryvasculitis.com

Rheumatology Clinic
 South Health Campus
 4448 Front Street SW, Calgary, AB T3M 1M4
 ph 403-956-2493
 fx 403-956-3835