

SARCOIDOSIS AND THE JOINTS, MUSCLES AND BONES

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Joint

Chronic joint pain affects less than 1% of all patients with sarcoidosis. It is important that your physician knows about your joint symptoms as you may benefit from changes in treatment or physiotherapy.

Symptoms:

Any joint can be affected by sarcoidosis, but the main joints affected are the feet, ankles and knees.

Symptoms commonly include:

- pain
- stiffness and rigidity
- swelling, sometime with red colouring

Investigations:

Joint pain is diagnosed via consultation with your doctor. Further investigations may include X-rays of your joints or other imaging scans (ultrasound or MRI). Your physician may take a sample of fluid from your swollen joint using a needle and syringe (biopsy).

Treatment:

There are a number of treatments that can reduce the symptoms in your joints. These may include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), corticosteroids (prednisolone) or other immune medications such as Methotrexate.

Advice:

Inflamed joints can be painful and can restrict daily movement. Despite this, try to keep moving and exercise daily. Exercise can help reduce stiffness felt around the joints. If you experience moderate to severe joint pain as a result of the exercise, stop immediately and consult your doctor.



‘Löfgren’s syndrome’

Some patients may develop sudden onset pain and swelling in the joints, most often at the ankles. At the same time, they may develop painful red or purple bumps at the shins. These skin changes are called ‘erythema nodosum’.

When these symptoms occur together, your physician may arrange a chest X-ray to look for enlarged lymph glands in the chest.

These lymph glands usually do not cause any symptoms. The combination of these joint symptoms, the skins changes (erythema nodosum) and enlarged lymph glands in the chest on X-ray is called ‘Löfgren’s syndrome’.

Treatment:

‘Löfgren’s syndrome’ often resolves by itself, without the need for specific medication. Sometimes non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) drugs or corticosteroids (prednisolone) are given for a short period to help ease your symptoms.