

# Vasculitis

## What causes Vasculitis?

- We do not know what causes most types of Vasculitis. Genetic factors (different genes) appear to be somewhat important in the disease. Vasculitis is thought to be an autoimmune disease, which means the body comes under attack by its own immune system.
- Some cases of Vasculitis are caused by reactions to medicines, infections, complication of cancer. It can be a part of other rheumatic diseases mainly systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis and Sjögren's syndrome.

## Who gets Vasculitis?

- Vasculitis affects persons of both sexes and all ages.

## What is Vasculitis?

- Vasculitis is a term for a group of rare diseases in which inflammation of blood vessels occurs. These vessels include arteries and veins. Vasculitis can result in poor blood flow to tissues throughout the body and disturbance in function of these organs.

## How long Vasculitis is treated?

It depends on type and severity of Vasculitis. Sometimes long term treatment is also required.

## How is Vasculitis treated?

- Treatment of Vasculitis is to remove or treat the underlying cause whenever known (e.g. treatment of cancer or stopping responsible drug)
- Rheumatologists use glucocorticoids, Cyclophosphamide, Methotrexate, Azathioprine or other immune-suppressing drugs to treat Vasculitis.

## How is Vasculitis diagnosed?

- Expert physicians suspect Vasculitis when a patient has symptoms and abnormal results of the physical exam/ lab tests or both; and there is no other clear cause. The affected organ or tissue biopsy (whenever possible) provides diagnosis.
- Imaging study like CT scan, MRI and Angiography etc can be used if needed to diagnose the condition.

## Is Vasculitis a critical illness?

- Yes. Sometimes Vasculitis leads to life threatening complication.

## What are symptoms of Vasculitis?

Vasculitis leads to two types of symptoms:

1. General symptoms related to inflammation of blood vessels like fever, loss of appetite, multiple joint pain and weight loss
2. Related to poor blood supply to a particular organ:

Cough/ shortness of breath (lung), numbness or weakness (brain), red spots or rashes (skin) etc.

