

WHAT IS SARCOIDOSIS?

Could You Have Sarcoidosis?

Some people with sarcoidosis may not show symptoms at all. People who do have symptoms may have:

- Shortness of breath
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Night sweats
- Weight loss

No single test can diagnose sarcoidosis. A doctor may first check your temperature, listen to your heartbeat, look for rashes or sores, and examine lymph nodes. The doctor may also check your breathing or run an X-ray, blood test, biopsy, eye exam, or other tests.

Learn the facts about sarcoidosis, its signs and symptoms, and ways to manage the disease after a diagnosis.

Basic Facts About Sarcoidosis

- **Sarcoidosis is a health condition that develops when groups of cells in the immune system form small lumps.** These lumps are called granulomas.
- **Sarcoidosis can affect different organs, but it usually affects the lungs.**
- **Sarcoidosis can be hard to diagnose.** Symptoms can vary from person to person. Doctors must run many tests to rule out other conditions.
- **Some people are more likely to have sarcoidosis.** They include:



People ages 55 and older



Women



African Americans and people of Scandinavian descent



People who work or live near harmful substances like smoke, mold, or chemicals



People who have a close relative with sarcoidosis



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Managing Sarcoidosis

There is no cure yet for sarcoidosis. For some people, the condition will go away without treatment. For others, treatment can help decrease the severity of symptoms.

Treatments include:

- **Medicines called corticosteroids** that help decrease inflammation
- **Certain medications**, such as methotrexate, that lower the immune system response
- **An antimalarial agent called hydroxychloroquine** for skin lesions, joint pain, or other symptoms
- **Oxygen therapy** for severe lung sarcoidosis

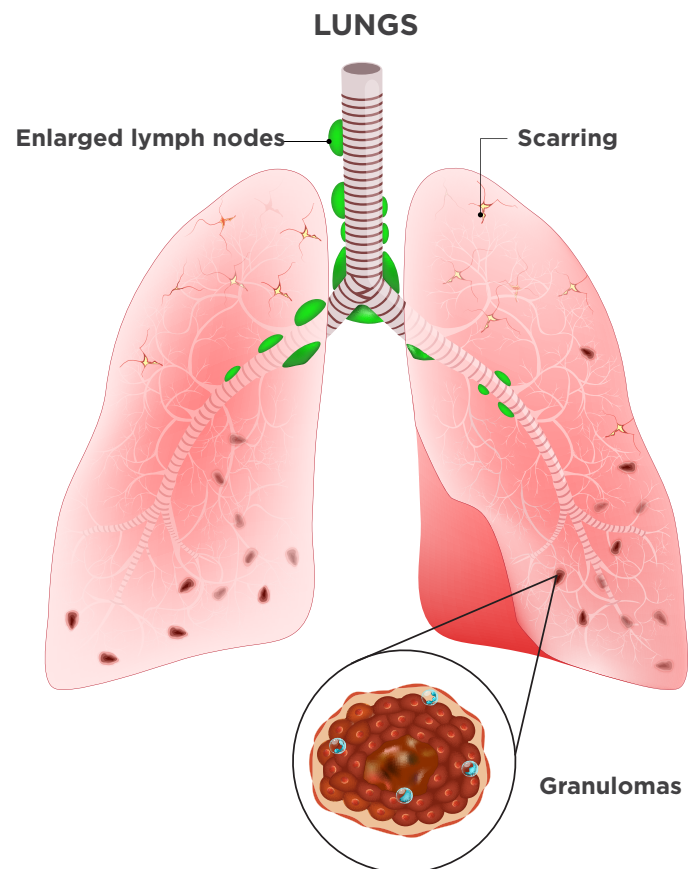
A doctor may recommend lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier, moving more, and quitting smoking. It is important to get ongoing care from a healthcare provider, who can keep track of the condition and adjust treatment as needed.

How Sarcoidosis Affects Your Breathing

Usually, your immune system creates inflammation to help fend off illness. With sarcoidosis, inflammation does not work this way. Cells in the immune system form lumps, or granulomas.

When this happens in the lungs, permanent scarring can develop. As time goes on, this scarring can make it harder to breathe.

The image below shows the effects of sarcoidosis on the lungs.



For more information about lung health, visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov/BreatheBetter.

For more information about sarcoidosis, visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/sarcoidosis.