

RHEUMATOID VASCULITIS

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune disease with symptoms that vary and may include joint pain, swelling and stiffness. Although there is a vast amount of education regarding RA and symptom relief; many patients may not be familiar with possible complications which could include Rheumatoid Vasculitis (RV).

The following guide provides insight on what Rheumatoid Vasculitis (RV) is, what some of the general causes and symptoms are, how Vasculitis is diagnosed and general treatment options.

01 | What is Vasculitis?

Rheumatoid Vasculitis (RV) is a rare condition that affects Rheumatoid Arthritis patients who have been suffering with RA over a long period of time. With RA the joints and tissues are attacked by the immune system. Similarly, RV causes the immune system to attack the body's organs. Additionally, Vasculitis occurs when the body's blood vessels become infected or inflamed. Once inflammation has begun, some of the following effects can happen:

- Weak blood veins – making it challenging to collect blood samples.
- Veins decrease or increase in size – this can cause blood clotting.
- Brain swelling

02 | Causes & Symptoms

Rheumatoid Vasculitis has no known causes and affects any demographic and age. However, those normally affected are patients with preexisting Rheumatoid Arthritis.

There are a vast number of symptoms caused by Vasculitis; the following symptoms require immediate attention:

- Decreased blood flow
- Rash
- Lesions
- Sclera (the white of the eye) turns different color or appear to have popped blood vessels
- Body aches and pains
- Exterior ulcers
- Irritation of the skin

03 | How is Vasculitis Diagnosed?

Physicians suspect Vasculitis when a patient has symptoms and abnormal results from a physical exam, lab tests or both, and there is no other clear cause.

The most common tests are:

- Biopsy—surgical removal of a small piece of tissue for inspection under a microscope.
- Angiography—a type of X-ray to look for abnormalities of blood vessels.
- Blood tests

For most patients, doctors can detect the type of Vasculitis based on the size of the affected blood vessels and the organs involved.

04 | Treatment Options

Following a diagnosis of Vasculitis, your medical provider will discuss possible options to treat the condition. Depending on the type and the severity of damage caused by Vasculitis, your medical provider may recommend immune-suppressing prescriptions or surgery. Speak with your medical provider to explore your options and establish a treatment plan.

For more information on Vasculitis, visit:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vasculitis/basics/definition/con-20026049>

Did You Know? Vasculitis could be a complication of Lupus or Rheumatoid Arthritis

References

<http://www.hopkinsvasculitis.org/types-vasculitis/rheumatoid-vasculitis/>

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/vas/types>

https://www.rheumatology.org/Practice/Clinical/Patients/Diseases_And_Conditions/Vasculitis/