

## Welcome to the: Orthopaedic Opinion Online Website

The website for the answer to all your Orthopaedic Questions

- **Orthopaedic Opinion Online** is a website designed to provide information to patients who have orthopaedic and musculoskeletal problems and are undergoing treatment.
- **Patient information** is provided in the form of downloadable information sheets.
- **Orthopaedic advice** and second opinions can be provided by our expert internationally renowned Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons.
- **Online review** of patients' X rays or MRI scans can also be provided and any proposed treatment plans reviewed.
- **Book a clinical consultation** with one of our internationally renowned consultant orthopaedic surgeons in Bristol or London.
- **Orthopaedic reports** can be provided for Injury or Accident Claims and Medical Negligence claims.

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## Polymyositis and Dermatomyositis

Link - <http://www.arc.org.uk/arthinfor/patpubs/6009/6009.asp>

### Polymyositis or dermatomyositis

Key words: muscle pains, myositis, polymyositis, corticosteroids.

Inflammation of the muscles is called myositis (myo = muscle, sitis = inflammation). Polymyositis is a condition which affects many muscles (poly = many), mainly the larger muscles of the body, such as those around the shoulders, hips and thighs. This booklet also deals with dermatomyositis. This is a disease where a particular skin rash occurs (derm = skin) with muscle inflammation that is similar to polymyositis.

This booklet explains:

- the nature of these conditions and the importance of getting proper treatment
- who is affected
- the probable causes of the conditions
- how doctors diagnose them and the tests used to do this
- treatments and possible side-effects of drug therapies
- current research into the conditions.

It also includes questions often raised by people who have polymyositis or dermatomyositis.

### What are the symptoms of polymyositis and dermatomyositis?

Polymyositis affects mainly the large muscles of the body, such as those around the shoulders, hips and thighs. If you suffer from it you may have difficulty climbing stairs, getting up from low chairs, and getting in and out of the bath. Your muscles may feel weak and very tired, so that tasks that are normally easy are now exhausting for you. You may also feel pain in your muscles, known as myalgia, and your inflamed muscles may be tender to the touch. People with polymyositis may feel generally unwell (malaise) and have weight loss or night sweats.

However, polymyositis is not always so severe. Symptoms range from mild pain and stiffness (making the condition difficult to diagnose) through to a condition which comes on rapidly with severe weakness becoming apparent within a few days. In a small number of cases polymyositis can become such a serious problem that it affects breathing and swallowing.

Polymyositis can develop in muscles alone or alongside inflammation of other tissues of the body. There can be a red/pink rash on the upper eyelids, face, neck, and backs of the hands and fingers. The affected skin may become swollen – which gives a characteristic puffiness and colouring around the eyes. When myositis occurs with this specific rash the condition is called dermatomyositis.

Polymyositis and dermatomyositis usually affect adults, though there is a type of dermatomyositis which affects children. This is called juvenile dermatomyositis.

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