

What you need to know about Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA)



Giant cell arteritis (GCA), or temporal arteritis, is a debilitating autoimmune disease that causes severe inflammation of blood vessels, especially arteries in the head across the temples and the aorta¹

Common symptoms of GCA include:¹

Symptoms of the head:



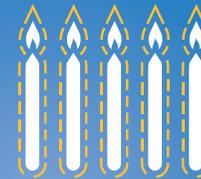
Headache Scalp tenderness Jaw pain Visual problems, including blindness

Other general symptoms:



Fatigue Weight loss Fever

GCA typically affects adults over 50 years old...



...and women are affected at least twice as often¹



The most commonly affected populations include Caucasians and those of Scandinavian descent¹

The prevalence of GCA has been estimated at more than 200 per 100,000 persons over the age of 50 in the United States, and increases dramatically with age^{1,2}



An even higher frequency has been reported in northern Europe³

High-dose steroids are often used to treat GCA but these commonly cause potentially serious and long-term side effects, including cataracts, fractures, infections, high blood pressure, diabetes, bone thinning and bowel bleeding, which can all severely impact a person's quality of life⁴



The discovery that GCA responds well to the anti-inflammatory properties of steroids was a major breakthrough in the treatment of GCA more than half a century ago^{4,5}



Rapid diagnosis and treatment are crucial to prevent the more serious complications of GCA, such as blindness, strokes and aneurysms¹



The exact cause of GCA is unknown, however, genetic and environmental factors are likely contributors¹



GCA can be difficult to diagnose because symptoms overlap with many other conditions, often resulting in a delayed or incorrect diagnosis¹

80%

The majority of patients (80%) will experience steroid-related side effects⁴



Great strides are being made in increasing our understanding of GCA, and how to best help people with this debilitating condition



Current research suggests there is an increase in IL-6, a protein that plays a fundamental role in inflammation, in patients with GCA^{6,7} It is thought that blocking IL-6 could reduce the inflammation of blood vessels in GCA⁶



Increased awareness and early diagnosis can help minimise the complications of GCA, and preserve what matters most to patients: their vision and quality of life

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