Sjogren's Syndrome

Sjogren's syndrome is an autoimmune disorder. With it, immune cells attack and destroy the glands that produce tears and saliva. Sjogren's syndrome is also linked to rheumatic disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis.

SYMPTOMS

The main symptoms of the disorder are dry mouth and dry eyes. It may also cause skin, nose, and vaginal dryness. It may affect other organs of the body. These include:

- Kidneys.
- Blood vessels.
- Lungs.
- Liver.
- Pancreas.
- Brain.

TREATMENT

There is no known cure for this syndrome. There is no specific treatment to restore gland secretion either. Treatment is generally symptomatic and supportive. Moisture replacement therapies may ease the symptoms of dryness. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs may be used to treat musculoskeletal symptoms. For individuals with severe complications, corticosteroids or immunosuppressive drugs may be prescribed.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

Sjogren's can damage vital organs of the body with symptoms that may plateau, worsen, or go into remission. Some people may have only the mild symptoms of dry eyes and mouth. Others go through cycles of good health followed by severe disease. Many patients are able to treat problems symptomatically. But some are forced to cope with:

- Blurred vision.
- Constant eye discomfort.
- Recurrent mouth infections.
- Swollen parotid glands.
- Hoarseness.
- Difficulty in swallowing and eating.

Severe fatigue and joint pain can seriously impair quality of life.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The goals of research on disorders such as Sjogren's syndrome focus on:

- Increasing knowledge and under-standing of the disorder.
- Improving diagnostic techniques.
- Finding ways to treat, prevent, and cure the disorder.

Research is continually being done to learn more about this problem.

Provided by: The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Document Released: 12/08/2003 Document Re-Released: 03/16/2010

ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.