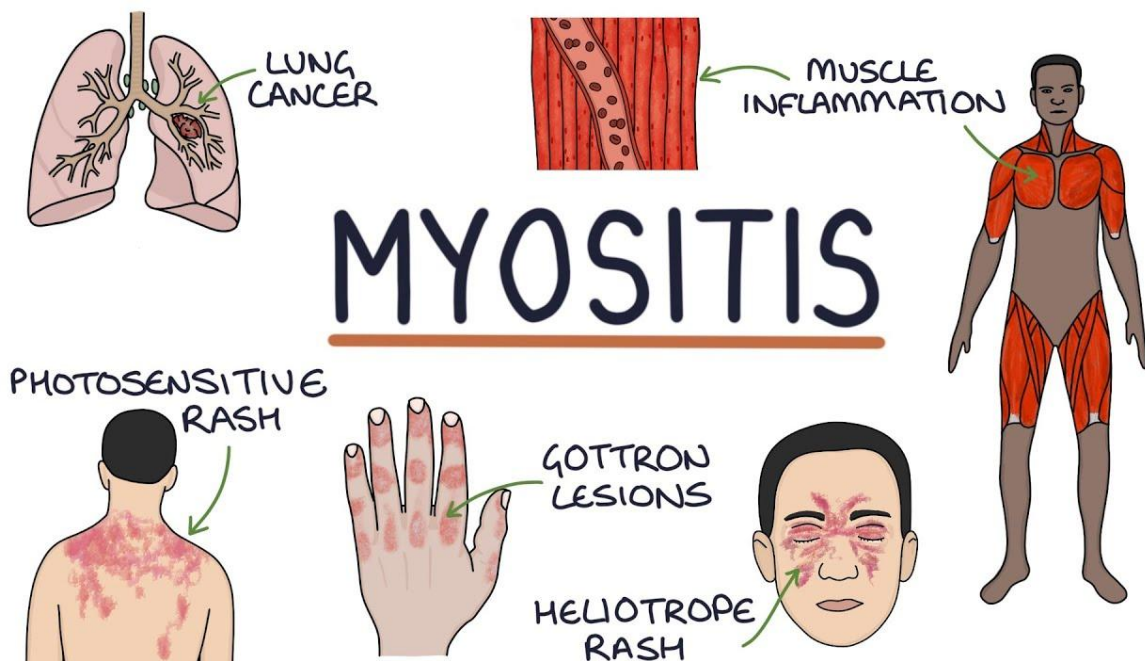


Polymyositis



What is Polymyositis?

Polymyositis is a **rare autoimmune condition** that causes **inflammation and weakness of the muscles**, mainly affecting the **shoulders, hips, thighs, and upper arms**.

The immune system mistakenly attacks healthy muscle tissue, leading to **muscle inflammation, pain, and progressive weakness**.

It usually develops gradually and affects adults more commonly than children.

Causes

The exact cause is not fully understood but may include:

- **Autoimmune disease** (immune system attacking muscles)
- Association with other autoimmune conditions
- Certain **viral triggers**
- Genetic susceptibility
- More common in women and in people aged **30–60 years**

Symptoms

Common symptoms include:

- **Muscle weakness**, especially in the shoulders, thighs, hips, and upper arms
- Difficulty with daily activities such as:
 - Climbing stairs
 - Rising from a chair
 - Lifting objects
 - Reaching overhead
- Muscle pain or tenderness
- Fatigue
- Difficulty swallowing (**dysphagia**)
- Unintentional weight loss
- Occasionally **breathlessness** if breathing muscles are affected

Symptoms usually develop gradually over **weeks to months**.

Diagnosis

Your doctor may perform several tests, including:

- **Blood tests** (to check muscle enzymes such as CK)
- **Autoimmune blood markers**

- **MRI** of muscles
 - **Electromyography (EMG)**
 - **Muscle biopsy** to confirm inflammation
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Treatment

Polymyositis is treatable, and many people improve with early and ongoing care.

1. Medications

- **Corticosteroids** (e.g., prednisolone) to reduce inflammation
- **Immunosuppressive medicines** such as methotrexate or azathioprine
- **Biologic therapies** (in resistant cases)

Your specialist will monitor your response and adjust treatment.

2. Physiotherapy

- Exercises to maintain **muscle strength and mobility**
- Gradual paced activity to avoid fatigue
- Advice on safe daily movements

3. Occupational Therapy

- Support with **daily tasks**, energy conservation, and equipment if needed

4. Speech and Swallow Therapy

If swallowing is affected.

5. Management of Associated Conditions

Some people may have:

- Interstitial lung disease
 - Heart involvement
- Regular monitoring is important.
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Self-Management Tips

- Pace activities: avoid **overexertion or sudden bursts** of activity
- Maintain a **regular gentle exercise routine**
- Eat a **balanced, high-protein diet** to support muscle repair

- Avoid smoking (helps protect muscles and lungs)
 - Attend regular follow-up appointments
 - Monitor for any **new symptoms** and report early
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When to Seek Medical Help

Contact your doctor if you experience:

- Worsening weakness
 - New swallowing difficulties
 - Shortness of breath
 - Side effects from medication
 - Fever or signs of infection
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Prognosis

- With early treatment, many people gain significant improvement
 - Some may have **flare-ups** or need long-term treatment
 - Ongoing physiotherapy and monitoring help maintain quality of life
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Useful Resources

- **NHS** – Inflammatory muscle diseases
- **Myositis UK** – Support and patient information
- **Versus Arthritis** – Autoimmune muscle conditions