

## Vision Statement

Funding research and enabling patients through support, awareness, rapid diagnosis and effective treatment.

*Founded May 1986*

# Vasculitis

## a family of diseases



Support

Awareness

Research

### About the Vasculitis Foundation

The Vasculitis Foundation (VF, formerly the Wegener's Granulomatosis Association) was founded in 1986 by Marilyn Sampson, a Wegener's patient and a registered nurse.

VF was established to alleviate the isolation that patients and their families experience when these rare life-threatening diseases affect them. VF helps patients and their families build a strong positive outlook.

### Support | Awareness | Research

Early diagnosis and effective treatment are critical for patients with vasculitis. Through the bimonthly newsletter, website, information packets, 800 telephone number and symposia, the VF educates its members about vasculitis. The foundation has a network of national and international area contacts, chapters and support groups that meet on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.

The Small Grant Research Program funds novel studies seeking the cause(s) of vasculitis, more effective treatments and a cure for vasculitis.

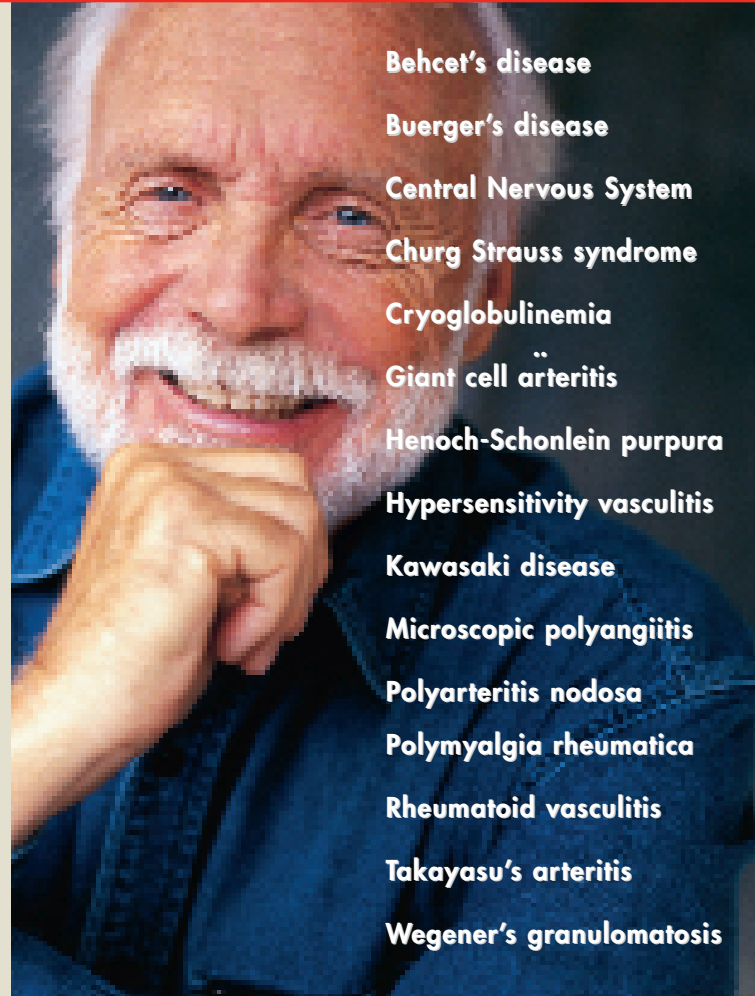
With their preliminary results, investigators can then apply to larger funding agencies for support. To date, the foundation has funded more than 12 studies.

### Medical Consultants

VF medical consultants are recognized authorities on vasculitis who provide free consultation to physicians who treat patients with vasculitis.

For a list of consultants, please visit:

[www.VasculitisFoundation.org](http://www.VasculitisFoundation.org)



Behcet's disease

Buerger's disease

Central Nervous System

Churg Strauss syndrome

Cryoglobulinemia

Giant cell arteritis

Henoch-Schonlein purpura

Hypersensitivity vasculitis

Kawasaki disease

Microscopic polyangiitis

Polyarteritis nodosa

Polymyalgia rheumatica

Rheumatoid vasculitis

Takayasu's arteritis

Wegener's granulomatosis

Support



Awareness

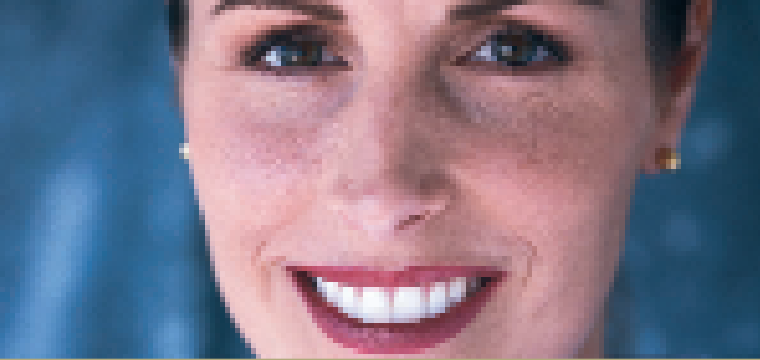


Research



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## What is Vasculitis?

Vasculitis is an inflammation of the blood vessels, arteries, veins or capillaries. When such inflammation occurs, it causes changes in the walls of blood vessels, such as weakening and narrowing that can progress to the point of blood vessel blockage.

A result of vasculitis is that the tissues and organs supplied by affected blood vessels do not get enough blood. This can result in organ and tissue damage, which can even lead to death.

Vasculitis represents a family of diseases. These diseases are rare and can affect people of all ages. Though some forms of vasculitis improve on their own, most require treatment. The duration of treatment varies, with some people using medications for an extended period of time.

The different types of vasculitis are classified according to the size and location of the blood vessels that are affected.

## Who gets Vasculitis?

Vasculitis can affect people of all ages, from children to older adults. Some types of vasculitis occur in certain age groups more than others.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms vary from patient to patient and depend upon the type of vasculitis. Some common symptoms include:

**Fatigue/Weakness**

**Chronic sinusitis/Nasal allergies**

**Cough/Shortness of breath**

**Lung inflammation**

**Asthma**

**Joint pain/Facial soreness**

**Abdominal pain/Gastrointestinal bleeding**

**Kidney problems (bloody urine, dark urine)**

**Nerve problems (numbness, weakness, pain)**

**Vision changes**

**Atypical severe headaches**

**Skin lesions/Rashes**

**Fever**

## What causes Vasculitis?

In most cases, the cause is unknown. A combination of factors can cause the inflammatory process to be set in motion. Vasculitis is a member of the autoimmune family of diseases. For reasons that are not yet understood, these diseases occur when the body mistakenly thinks that some of its own cells are foreign invaders and produces antibodies as a defense against infection.

## How is Vasculitis diagnosed?

Diagnosis is made by clinical and laboratory findings such as blood tests, urinalysis, chest and sinus x-rays, angiograms, pathology and other tests as needed. A tissue biopsy is usually the definitive test.

## What is the prognosis?

Early diagnosis and proper treatment can bring vasculitis into remission, although there is still no known cure. Many patients lead full, productive lives with management of their chronic disease.

## What is the treatment?

Treatment for vasculitis depends on the severity of symptoms and the patient's general health. Treatment can include corticosteroids medication, immunosuppressive drugs, biologic therapeutics and antibiotics. Other treatments might include plasmapheresis and intravenous gamma globulin.

