



## Join our team!

We are always looking for volunteers to get involved in our work such as fund raising, awareness campaigns and assisting with ISARC support groups.

### ISARC SUBSCRIPTION/DONATION FORM

Annual subscription fee is €20 per person.

I/We enclose a cheque/postal order payable to ISARC for:

Subscription:

Donation:  Total:

Name(s):

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Age: Under 20  21-40  41-60  Over 60

Date:

Would you act on a voluntary basis for ISARC? Y  N

**Cut off this page and return to:**

ISARC, Ard Aoibhinn, Mount Bolus, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

### What is the Treatment for Sarcoidosis

Treatment will vary depending on how severe the symptoms are. Most patients require no treatment. Rest is generally advised. Others may only require aspirin or anti-inflammatories for aches and pains or eye drops for eye symptoms.

Patients with significant symptoms are normally treated with steroids. The dose of steroids will relate to the severity of the symptoms. Steroids are very effective in treating the symptoms of sarcoidosis by reducing the number of granulomas formed and improving organ function. Steroids are powerful drugs that can lead to side effects which should be monitored and managed by your doctor.

**Do not stop taking steroids suddenly without medical advice as this can result in flare-ups of the disease and other potential health problems.**

Most people with sarcoidosis will lead a normal and healthy life. Patients should be regularly monitored for changes in their condition to determine if the disease is progressing.

### What does ISARC do?

#### ISARC aims are to:

- Bring fellow sufferers together to support each other and their families.
- Provide and share information and experiences, acting as a forum to help those affected to understand the condition.
- Support the medical profession in the early diagnosis and treatment of patients with sarcoidosis
- Increase public awareness of sarcoidosis.

#### Support Group Meetings

For information about support group meetings in your area please visit [www.isarc.ie](http://www.isarc.ie)

ISARC is affiliated to the Irish Health Lung Alliance.

ISARC, Ard Aoibhinn, Mount Bolus, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

**[www.isarc.ie](http://www.isarc.ie)** email: [info@isarc.ie](mailto:info@isarc.ie)

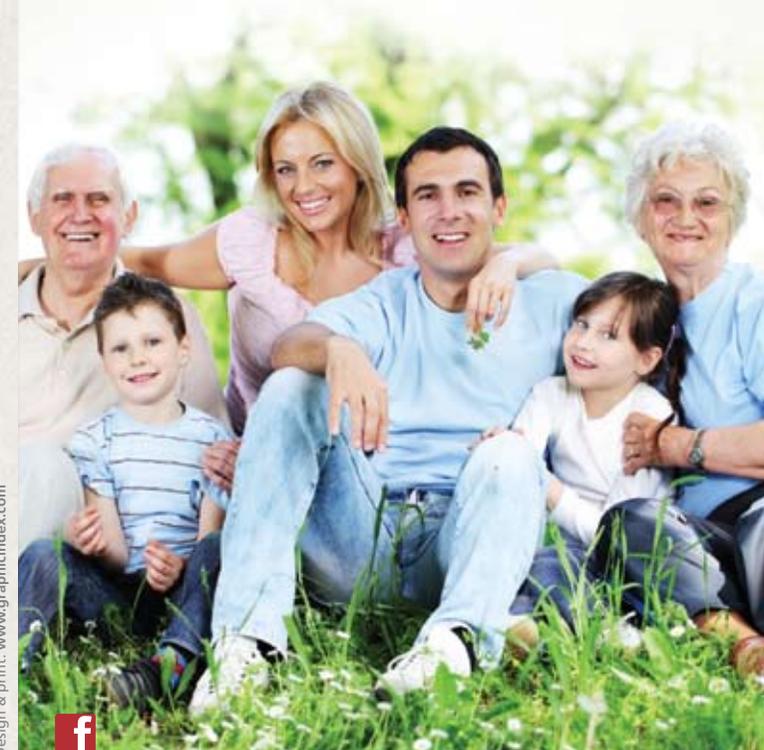


# isarc

## Irish Sarcoidosis Support Network

ISARC offers support and provides information to sufferers, families and carers.

For information about ISARC in your area visit: [www.isarc.ie](http://www.isarc.ie) or email: [info@isarc.ie](mailto:info@isarc.ie)



## What is Sarcoidosis?

Sarcoidosis is a disease which can affect any organ of the body, although it most commonly affects the lungs, eyes, lymph nodes and skin.

The body's immune system generally protects against foreign and harmful substances, for example viruses, bacteria and chemicals. The body ordinarily responds by releasing white blood cells to the affected organ. These cells produce chemicals which help inflammation to break up and destroy the foreign particles.

Sarcoidosis is thought to occur as a result of an abnormal immune response where the body believes itself to be under attack and triggers an immune reaction. An excess build up of white blood cells leads to the formation of granulomas on the affected organ. Granulomas are clusters of these defensive cells that grow together to form lumps. They can impair the function of the organ thus causing the symptoms of sarcoidosis. These granulomas usually resolve on their own or following medication, however in a small number of cases permanent scarring (fibrosis) can occur which is why early detection and treatment of sarcoidosis is important.

**Sarcoidosis is not a cancerous or contagious disease.**

## What Causes Sarcoidosis?

The cause of sarcoidosis is unknown and current research is directed towards identifying which factors may trigger the disease. Genetic and environmental factors are of particular interest in addition to infectious agents.

## Who Can Get it?

Worldwide it affects 1 - 2 in every 10,000 people, however Ireland has a much higher incidence.

It is most often diagnosed in young adults between the ages of 20 and 40 years although it can also affect older and younger people. It affects both sexes, but is more common amongst women.

Sarcoidosis affects all races. The disease is however more prevalent amongst those of African American, Irish, German, Puerto Rican and Scandinavian origin.

## What are The Common Symptoms?

Symptoms of sarcoidosis are generally variable. Some sufferers will have no symptoms of the disease. Symptoms can often occur quite suddenly (**acute sarcoidosis**) or slowly over a number of years (**chronic sarcoidosis**). Symptoms will depend on which organs are affected but the most common are:

- Tiredness, fatigue and weakness.
- Loss of appetite or weight.
- Joint and muscle pain.
- Enlarged lymph glands.
- Dry cough.
- Shortness of breath.
- Wheezing.
- Red eyes with itching or blurring.
- Skin rash which may itch but is not painful.
- Fever.
- Night sweats.

## How is Sarcoidosis Diagnosed?

Sarcoidosis is difficult to diagnose as the symptoms can be very similar to other diseases such as tuberculosis, lupus, arthritis and ME (myalgic encephalopathy).

Whilst there is no definitive test for sarcoidosis, a detailed medical history and physical examination by your doctor can lead to further diagnostic tests such as:

- Chest X-ray - this may identify enlarged glands or shadowing within the lungs.
- Blood Tests - to analyse blood cells and how they are functioning. Angiotensin-converting Enzyme (ACE) is specifically monitored as granulomas secrete ACE and levels are generally raised in patients with sarcoidosis.
- Pulmonary Function Tests (Lung Function Test) - to show how well the lungs are working.
- Computerised Tomography (CT) Scan - which gives a more detailed picture of organs.
- Biopsy - where a small piece of tissue is taken from the affected organ and examined under a microscope for granuloma formation.
- Bronchoscopy - a routine and generally uncomplicated investigation of the airways is undertaken. A small tube is passed through the mouth or nose into the lungs. Often a biopsy is taken during this procedure.
- Eye examination - using a slit lamp, to examine the inside of the eye.

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**Thousands of Irish people are affected**



**Sarcoidosis can occur in any organ of the body**



**Sarcoidosis mainly affects 20-40 year olds**



**There is no known cause or cure**