

LIVING WITH ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS

Ankylosing Spondylitis Can Cause Eye Inflammation Which Can Lead to Heart and Lung Problems

AS Affects More Men than Women and Can Affect the Entire Body

Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) is a complex and painful condition that can cause significant changes to a patient's quality of life. The earlier the disease is caught the easier it is to combat symptoms and possible damage.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of ankylosing spondylitis cause, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment.

01 | Cause

The exact cause of Ankylosing Spondylitis is unknown, however genetics is a major link in patients with AS. Specific genetic markers have been linked to the disease and over 60 genes have been associated with AS. It is believed that genes, along with other environmental factors can trigger the disease.

02 | Symptoms

Ankylosing spondylitis is an inflammatory disease that, over time, can cause some of the vertebrae in your spine to fuse. Signs and symptoms typically begin in early adulthood. Early signs and symptoms of ankylosing spondylitis might include pain and stiffness in your lower back and hips, especially in the morning and after periods of inactivity. Neck pain and fatigue also are common. Over time, symptoms might worsen, improve or stop at irregular intervals. The area's most commonly affected are:

- The joint between the base of the spine and your pelvis (sacroiliac)
- The vertebrae in the lower back
- The places where tendons and ligaments attach to bones (entheses), mainly in the spine, but sometimes along the back of the heel
- The cartilage between the breastbone and ribs
- Hip and shoulder joints

03 | Diagnosis

During a physical exam, the medical provider may ask the patient to bend in different directions to test the range of motion in the spine. They might try to reproduce the pain by pressing on specific portions of the pelvis or by moving the legs into a particular position. Also, lungs may be evaluated by deep breathing to determine if there is any difficulty expanding the chest. A MRI can detect the disease in its early stages but an X-ray can diagnosis a further progressed level of the disease.

04 | Treatment

The goal of treatment is to relieve pain , stiffness, prevent or delay complications and spinal deformity. The following options can aid in treating ankylosing spondylitis:

- Medications for pain and inflammation
- Physical therapy to retain flexibility and movement
- Exercise to help with strength and reduce stiffness
- Surgery to repair damage and relieve pain causing complications

For more information on ankylosing spondylitis and other arthritic conditions, please visit:

<http://www.arthritis.org/>

*Did You Know?
Ankylosing spondylitis is a
form of arthritis*

References

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ankylosing-spondylitis/home/ovc-20261048>

<http://www.webmd.com/back-pain/guide/ankylosing-spondylitis>