

**Erythema**

**Nodosum**

# Definition

A group of symptoms including formation of characteristic painful, **red skin nodules**.

# Causes, Incidence, and Risk Factors

- Erythema nodosum is characterised by
  - Tender
  - Reddened nodules
  - Usually on the front of the legs.
  - More common in women.
- Cause unknown

Some cases may be associated with infection such  
as

- streptococcus infections
- fungal infections,
- tuberculosis, hepatitis B, syphilis, leptospirosis,
- Psittacosis
- mononucleosis ([EBV](#)) infection
- sarcoidosis.

- Sensitivity to drugs is thought to cause at least 50% of cases.
- Associated disorders include leukaemia, sarcoidosis, rheumatic fever, and ulcerative colitis, TB, and conditions such as pregnancy and use of oral contraceptives.
- Characteristically appears on the shins.
  - buttocks,
  - calves,
  - ankles,
  - thighs
  - upper extremities

# Symptoms

- Fever
- Malaise)
- Arthralgia
- Skin redness, inflammation, or irritation
- Swelling of the leg

- skin lesion:
  - Nodule, may be multiple
  - Painful
  - Located on the anterior surface of the lower leg
  - Occasionally located on the arms, trunk, or face
  - Reddened
  - May feel warm to touch
  - Not ulcerated (DD Point)
  - Fades within several weeks

# Signs and Tests

The diagnosis is primarily based on the appearance of the skin nodules.

Biopsy of a nodule may show characteristic changes (septal panniculitis).

# Treatment

- The underlying infection or drug must be identified and treated.
- NSAIDs
- Occasionally, oral potassium iodide solution may produce prompt resolution of the nodules.
- Corticosteroids to reduce acute inflammation.
- Hot or cold compresses may reduce discomfort.

# Prevention

No prevention is known.

People who have Erythema nodosum should avoid medications that precipitate this condition.

# Prognosis

Erythema nodosum is uncomfortable but not usually dangerous to the health. Symptoms usually disappear within about 6 weeks but may recur.

# Complications

Aside from possible recurring symptoms, there are no complications.



