



BRIEF FACTS ABOUT MYOSITIS

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Myositis means muscle inflammation. Some of the chronic or persistent forms are idiopathic (meaning unknown) inflammatory myopathies. The inflammatory myopathies are a group of diseases that involve chronic muscle inflammation, accompanied by weakness. These can include:

- Dermatomyositis
- Polymyositis
- Juvenile dermatomyositis
- Juvenile polymyositis
- Myositis that occurs with other systemic (body-wide) rheumatic diseases, such as mixed connective tissue disease, lupus, and scleroderma
- Autoimmune necrotizing myopathy

Clinical manifestations that are common to the inflammatory myopathies are muscle weakness, difficulty swallowing (dysphagia), choking, changes in voice (dysphonia) especially hoarseness, general tiredness, skin changes and rashes.

Treatment can involve medications, such as Prednisone and immunosuppressants such as Methotrexate and Azathioprine as well as some useful general measures as a precaution to prevent complications related to the disease

and its treatments.

These precautions can include:

- Osteoporosis prevention – A calcium supplement with vitamin D and a prescription medication
- Exercise – Physical therapy and rehabilitation should begin soon after diagnosis
- Avoidance of sunlight and use of sun protection measures due to medications and skin manifestations of some forms
- Aspiration prevention – Patients who have trouble swallowing must take care to avoid inhaling (aspirating) foods and drinks.
- Prevention of infection in particular respiratory infections such as pneumonia. The medications used to treat some myositis disorders may weaken the immune system and ability to fight off infections.

The cause of the idiopathic inflammatory myopathies remains undetermined. All are thought to be due to immune system abnormalities. Myositis are rare disorders, together affecting about 1 in 100,000 people per year. More women than men are affected. Although the peak age of onset is in the 50s, the disorders can occur at any age.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT THE
MYOSITIS ASSOCIATION AT
WWW.MYOSITIS.ORG.AU

REFERENCE: UPTODATE
WWW.UPTODATE.COM

Right: Our Sussex Inlet Cafe
Conversation Convenor,
Pam, joined Myositis
Australia at Nowra

