

What are the Symptoms?

The main symptoms are:

- Muscle pain and stiffness in the upper arms, neck, buttocks and thighs on both sides of the body
- Pain and stiffness worse in the morning, and after not moving, such as after a long car ride or sitting too long in one position
- Difficulty sleeping and doing daily activities (for example, lifting the arms to put on a jacket, bending over to pull on shoes or getting up from a low chair) due to pain and stiffness.

Other symptoms are:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Loss of Appetite
- Weight Loss
- Sadness and Depression

What are the Causes?

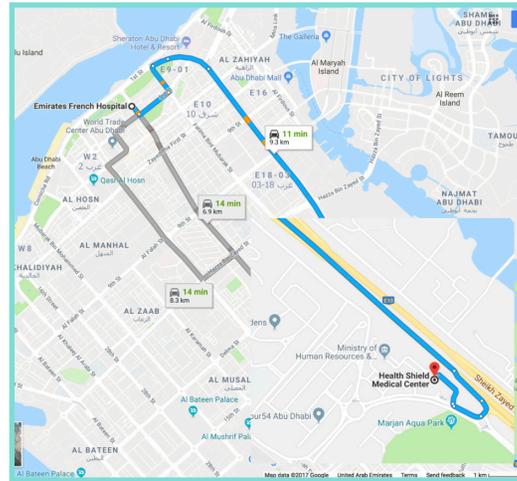
The exact cause of PMR is unknown, but immune system problems and aging are possible factors. It may also be hereditary.

In people with polymyalgia rheumatica, inflammation might be found in blood tests but there is no obvious cause. Genetics and/or environmental factors, such as an infection, may play roles in causing this type of arthritis. It has yet to be proven in research.

Some people with PMR get inflamed blood vessels (usually in the head), a serious problem called **temporal arteritis**.

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GUIDE TO POLYMYALGIA RHEUMATICA



Polymyalgia rheumatica means 'pain in many muscles'.

It is a condition that causes inflammation of the joints and tissues around the joints. It causes muscles to feel painful and stiff, especially in the shoulder, neck and hip areas.

DO

- Follow your doctor's directions.
- Tell your doctor about other medical conditions you may have.
- Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking (including prescription and non-prescription).
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant.
- Take your steroids with food.
- Have your blood pressure checked.
- Get tested for diabetes while taking steroids.
- See your eye doctor every year.
- Get plenty of exercise, at least 30 minutes daily (ask your doctor which exercise is best for you).
- Try to control your weight.
- Stop smoking.
- Call your doctor or go to the ER immediately if you have a severe headache or change in vision.
- Call your doctor if it's painful to chew your food.

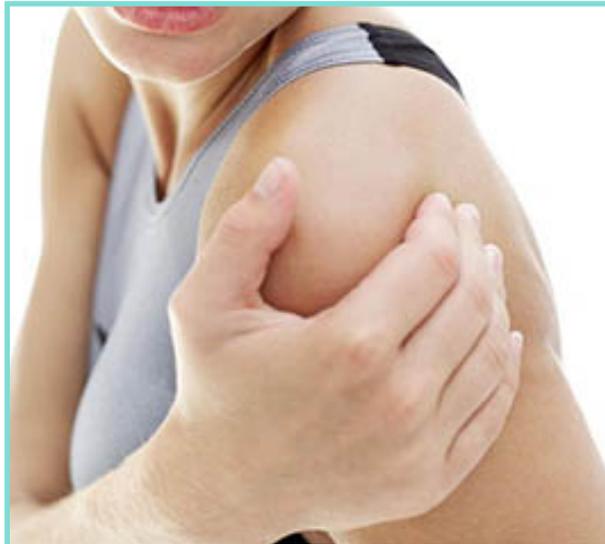
DON'T

- Don't stop taking your medicine or change the dosage when feel better.
- Don't drink alcohol.
- Don't take any medicine unless your doctor tells you to.

How is it Diagnosed?

There is no single test that can diagnose polymyalgia rheumatica. Your doctor will diagnose polymyalgia rheumatica from your symptoms, a physical examination and blood tests that measure levels of inflammation. These tests measure the erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) or C-reactive protein (CRP) blood level. However some people with polymyalgia rheumatica can have normal blood tests.

It may take several weeks for your doctor to make a diagnosis because other illnesses have to be eliminated.



What treatment is needed?

Your doctor will give you medicine to help ease the pain and stiffness. The most common treatments are **steroids** that help lessen the inflammation in the muscles; you may need medication like **methotrixcite** in severe cases.

Your doctor will usually start you on a dose that relieves your symptoms, and then slowly reduce the dose to the

RECOVERY TIME

You should feel better after a day or two; You may need to be treated for 1 to 2 years.

What will happen to me?

The good news is that the symptoms of polymyalgia rheumatica usually improve with treatment. PMR can return, particularly when you stop treatment, but the good news is that PMR does not cause permanent damage to the joints.



lowest possible amount that keeps you symptom free.

Your doctor may also ask you start a regular exercise program; exercise can help lessen the pain.

Your doctor may also prescribe a second medicine to help keep your bones strong, since steroids may cause bone weakness.