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# Polymyositis

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

## Source

*National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Polymyositis Information Page](#).*

Polymyositis is one of a group of muscle diseases known as the inflammatory myopathies, which are characterized by chronic muscle inflammation accompanied by muscle weakness. Polymyositis affects skeletal muscles (those involved with making movement) on both sides of the body. It is rarely seen in persons under age 18; most cases are in adults between the ages of 31 and 60. Progressive muscle weakness starts in the proximal muscles (muscles closest to the trunk of the body) which eventually leads to difficulties climbing stairs, rising from a seated position, lifting objects, or reaching overhead. People with polymyositis may also experience arthritis, shortness of breath, difficulty swallowing and speaking, and heart arrhythmias. In some cases of polymyositis, distal muscles (muscles further away from the trunk of the body, such as those in the forearms and around the ankles and wrists) may be affected as the disease progresses. Polymyositis may be associated with collagen-vascular or autoimmune diseases, such as lupus. Polymyositis may also be associated with infectious disorders, such as HIV-AIDS.