

Lymphatic and Immune System Diseases and Disorders Information Sheet

There are numerous disorders that could develop as a result of some pathological malfunction in many of the human body systems. In the study of the lymphatic system, one could find lymphatic structural disorders, allergic reactions, autoimmune disorders, immunodeficiency disorders, and many kinds of cancer. For this basic study of diseases or disorders, please view the following table for a reference to some of the more common conditions as well as a few of the less common conditions. The information for this chart was obtained from *Diversified Health Occupations, 5th Edition* by Louise Simmers; *Medical Assisting: Administrative and Clinical Competencies, 4th Edition* by Lucille Keir, Barbara A Wise, and Connie Krebs, and *Medical Terminology for Health Professionals, 3rd Edition* by Ann Ehrlich and from <http://www.Medicinenet.com>

Disorder	Description	Causes	Symptoms	Treatment
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)	Advanced stages of HIV infection, characterized by serious infections, cancers, and other disorders.	(HIV) human immunodeficiency virus	Early: positive HIV blood test, weight loss, recurrent fever, night sweats, skin rashes, diarrhea, fatigue, and swollen lymph nodes. Later: cancers such as Kaposi's sarcoma; opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis, pneumocystic carinii, Candidiasis, toxoplasmosis; and other disorders such as persistent enlarged lymph nodes	No cure, but treat the various symptoms. Much research is being done to prevent and drugs to cure the disease. Drugs such as Zidovudine are used to slow the progression of the disease.
Addison's Disease	A life-threatening autoimmune disorder of the adrenal cortex	Decrease secretion of aldosterone by the adrenal cortex resulting in interference of reabsorption of sodium and water and an increased level of potassium in the blood	Dehydration, hypotension, mental lethargy, weight loss, muscle weakness, excessive yellow-brown coloring of the skin, hypoglycemia, and edema.	Steroid hormones, controlled intake of sodium, and fluid regulation to prevent dehydration.

Disorder	Description	Causes	Symptoms	Treatment
Crohn's Disease	Chronic autoimmune disorder involving any part of the gastrointestinal tract, but especially the walls of ileum or colon. The walls may become edematous ulcerate, narrow, and become abscessed.	Unknown, but some think that it might be caused by allergies or infections.	Acute episodes often cause appendicitis-type pain in right lower quadrant with flatulence, nausea, fever, and diarrhea. Bloody stools may be present. Chronic disease may have diarrheal episodes of four to six stools daily, marked weight loss, weakness, and difficulty dealing with everyday stress.	Symptomatic treatment including dietary supplements, steroids to reduce inflammation, antibacterial agents. Lifestyle changes of more rest and dietary adjustments, such as restrictions of some fruits and vegetables that might cause attacks. Surgery sometimes necessary.
Diabetes Mellitus	A complex metabolic disorder of the pancreas	Inadequate insulin secretion	Hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), excessive urination, thirst, hunger, sugar in urine, weight loss, fatigue, vision changes, slow healing of wounds or infections.	Regulate diet to control level of blood sugar, exercise, and oral medications or insulin injections to lower blood sugar levels.
Grave's Disease	An autoimmune disorder of the thyroid gland	Increased secretion of thyroxine	Strained or tense facial expressions, protruding eyeballs, goiter, nervous irritability, emotional instability, tachycardia (fast heart), great appetite but weight loss, diarrhea	Medications to slow the production of thyroxine, radioactive iodine to destroy thyroid tissue, and thyroidectomy
Hashimoto's Thyroiditis (hypothyroidism)	An autoimmune disorder where the immune system attacks thyroid tissue	Believed to have a genetic basis. Thyroid enlargement decreases the ability to produce thyroid hormones.	Thyroid tenderness. General symptoms: fatigue, depression, modest weight gain, cold intolerance, dry course hair, dry skin. Progressed symptoms: puffiness around eyes, slow heart, low body temperature	Oral medications replacing thyroid hormone, such as Synthroid. Thyroidectomy sometimes needed.

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Mononucleosis	Presence of an abnormally large number of atypical lymphocytes that have a single nucleus (monocytes)	Epstein-Barr Virus that is spread by saliva	Fever, fatigue, sore throat, swollen lymph glands. Can progress to hepatitis and splenomegaly.	Rest, pain medications, and sometimes anti-viral medications.
Multiple Sclerosis	A chronic, debilitating, and progressive autoimmune disorder of brain and spinal cord that destroys the protective covering of the nerve fibers of the brain and spinal cord.	Unknown, but usually begins between the ages of twenty and forty.	Early symptoms: visual disturbances, weakness, fatigue, poor coordination, tingling, and numbness. Late symptoms: Tremors, paralysis, spastic muscles, emotional swings, incontinence, and speech disturbances	No cure. However, physical therapy, muscle relaxants, steroids, and counseling help maintain function as long as possible.
Myasthenia Gravis	An autoimmune disorder of nerve impulses not properly transmitted to muscles.	Unknown why antibodies attack the body's own tissues.	Episodes of muscle weakness that may lead to paralysis. Can be fatal if reaches respiratory muscles	No cure, but try to be supportive of victim as disease progresses.
Psoriasis	A chronic autoimmune disorder of integumentary system	Thought to be hereditary.	Itching, red papules covered with silvery scales occurring mostly on elbows, knees, scalp, and trunk.	No cure. However, coal/tar or cortisone ointments, ultraviolet light, and/or scale removal are common treatments.
Rheumatoid Arthritis	A chronic systemic inflammatory autoimmune disorder of joints and connective tissues and surrounding muscles, tendons, ligaments, and blood vessels.	Malfunction of immune response causing inflammation to dilate blood vessels and cause fluid to accumulate in the joint cavity. These cycles eventually cause destruction of joint.	Affected joints stiffen following inactivity, swell, and show signs of deformity. As the disease progresses, the joints become tender, painful, hot and enlarged with marked deformities.	Salicylates to reduce inflammation. Corticosteroids, anti-inflammatory agents, gold salts, and antimalarial drugs have helped. Acute episodes are treated with ice packs. Chronic cases need range of motion exercises and heat applications. Rest.

Disorder	Description	Causes	Symptoms	Treatment
Scleroderma	An autoimmune disorder of the skin, "hard skin"	Unknown but thought to be inherited.	Abnormal tissue thickening that usually starts on fingers, hands, or face. Tiny calcium deposits in skin. Tiny red areas on face, hands, and in mouth behind lips. Raynaud's Phenomenon (fingers turn white, then blue, and then red when exposed to cold or heat due to tiny artery spasms)	Individualized to the specific symptom at the particular site.
Splenomegaly	Enlargement of the spleen	Can be caused by abnormal accumulation of red blood cells, mononucleosis, and cirrhosis of liver	Swelling and abdominal pain. If spleen ruptures, internal hemorrhage and shock occur.	Treat causes. However, if cause cannot be treated, a splenectomy is done.
Systemic Lupus Erythematosus	An autoimmune disorder affecting many body systems, such as joints, skin, connective tissues, and other major body organs, such as kidneys, lungs, heart, and nervous system.	Unknown immune system changes.	Beginning symptoms: fever, weight loss, headache, fatigue, swollen glands, depression, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, easy bruising, hair loss, edema. More specific are: rash over cheeks and bridge of nose, rash after sun exposure, arthritis in two or more joints, bald spots, ulcers inside mouth, anemia, pleurisy, Raynaud's Phenomenon.	Rest when needed, but try to carry on normal activities of daily living. Avoid sun exposure during peak hours of sunlight. Anti-inflammatory and pain medications for joint and muscle pain. Steroids.
Tonsillitis	Inflammation of the tonsils	Irritability of tonsil tissues or pathogenic invasion of tonsil tissue	Throat pain, difficulty swallowing, fever, white or yellow spots on the tonsils, swollen lymph nodes below the jawbone	Antibiotics, warm throat irrigation (gargle), rest, and pain medications. If chronic or frequent infections occur, may need tonsillectomy

