



Autoimmune Resource and Research Centre

Information Sheet

CREST

Limited scleroderma: Limited scleroderma typically comes on gradually and affects the skin only in certain areas: the fingers, hands, face, lower arms, and legs. Many people with limited disease have Raynaud's phenomenon for years before skin thickening starts. Others start out with skin problems over much of the body, which improves over time, leaving only the face and hands with tight, thickened skin. Telangiectasias and calcinosis often follow. Because of the predominance of CREST in people with limited disease, some doctors refer to limited disease as the CREST syndrome.

- **Calcinosis** (KAL-sin-OH-sis): the formation of calcium deposits in the connective tissues, which can be detected by x ray. They are typically found on the fingers, hands, face, and trunk and on the skin above elbows and knees. When the deposits break through the skin, painful ulcers can result.
- **Raynaud's** (ray-NOHZ) **phenomenon:** a condition in which the small blood vessels of the hands and/or feet contract in response to cold or anxiety. As the vessels contract, the hands or feet turn white and cold, then blue. As blood flow returns, they become red. Fingertip tissues may suffer damage, leading to ulcers, scars, or gangrene.
- **Esophageal** (eh-SOFF-uh-GEE-ul) **dysfunction:** impaired function of the oesophagus (the tube connecting the throat and the stomach) that occurs when smooth muscles in the oesophagus lose normal movement. In the upper oesophagus, the result can be swallowing difficulties; in the lower oesophagus, the problem can cause chronic heartburn or inflammation.
- **Sclerodactyly** (SKLER-oh-DAK-till-ee): thick and tight skin on the fingers, resulting from deposits of excess collagen within skin layers. The condition makes it harder to bend or straighten the fingers. The skin may also appear shiny and darkened, with hair loss.
- **Telangiectasias** (tel-AN-jee-ek-TAY-zee-uhs): small red spots on the hands and face that are caused by the swelling of tiny blood vessels. While not painful, these red spots can create cosmetic problems.

For more information education and support contact the Autoimmune Resource and Research Centre

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