



Ophthalmology • Refractive Surgery
Laser, Cataract & Implant Surgery

Stevens-Johnson Syndrome

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Stevens-Johnson Syndrome (SJS), also called erythema multiforme major, is a disorder of the skin that can also affect the eyes.

Symptoms

SJS is characterized by painful, blistering lesions on the skin and the mucous membranes (the thin, moist tissues that line body cavities) of the mouth, throat, genital region, and eyelids. SJS can cause serious eye problems, such as severe conjunctivitis; iritis, an inflammation inside the eye; corneal blisters and erosions; and corneal holes. In some cases, the ocular complications from SJS can be disabling and lead to severe vision loss.

Scientists are not certain why SJS develops. The most commonly cited cause of SJS is an adverse allergic drug reaction. Almost any drug - but most particularly sulfa drugs - can cause SJS. The allergic reaction to the drug may not occur until 7-14 days after first using it. SJS can also be preceded by a viral infection, such as herpes or the mumps, and its accompanying fever, sore throat, and sluggishness.

Treatment

Treatment for the eye may include artificial tears, antibiotics, or corticosteroids. About one-third of all patients diagnosed with SJS have recurrences of the disease.

SJS occurs twice as often in men as women, and most cases appear in children and young adults under 30, although it can develop in people at any age.

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