



Granuloma Annulare

What is granuloma annulare (GA)? GA is a bumpy, ring-like rash that affects the skin of teenagers or young adults. It is twice as common in women than it is in men.

What causes GA? The cause is unknown. Some patients with extensive GA have diabetes mellitus or a compromised immune system (e.g. HIV).

What does GA look like? Skin-colored, pink or tan bumps develop most commonly over the joints, particularly the knuckles, elbows and knees. They may form a ring-like (annular) lesion with a slightly depressed center. Lesions tend to be symmetrical, affecting both sides of the body. GA can occur on other sites of the body, such as the abdomen or neck, and is occasionally diffuse and widespread. It usually does not cause significant symptoms, but can be tender to the touch.

How is GA treated? Dermatologists may make the diagnosis from the appearance of the rash, but a skin biopsy looking for its characteristic features under the microscope may be necessary to confirm it. In most cases, treatment is not necessary since GA will often disappear after a few weeks or months without leaving a scar. It may recur at the same site or somewhere else at a later date, and sometimes it may take years for it to resolve on its own.

If treatment is desired, prescription steroids are either applied topically to the affected skin or injected directly into the lesions. Liquid nitrogen is sometimes used to freeze the lesions. In cases with widespread lesions, certain oral medications or a special type of light therapy (PUVA) may be tried. Although these treatments are often successful, GA can recur when they are discontinued.

For more information about granuloma annulare go to:

www.aad.org/public/publications/pamphlets/common_granuloma.html

www.dermnetz.org/dermal-infiltrative/granuloma-annulare.html