

Cutaneous necrotizing vasculitis is a not uncommon disorder characterized by an inflammation of the blood vessel walls and skin lesions. These skin lesions may be flat and red (macules), nodules or more substantial hemorrhages under the skin (purpura). They may occur on many areas of the body but are seen most often on the back, hands, buttocks, the inside areas of the forearm and the lower extremities. These skin symptoms may occur only once or at regular intervals. They will usually last for several weeks and may leave darkened spots and scarring. In some cases there may be wheel-like lesions that cause intense itching (urticaria), or ring-shaped lesions and ulcers. Blister-like lesions (vesicles, bullae) may develop in severe cases. There may also be fever, generalized discomfort (malaise), muscle or joint pain. Cutaneous necrotizing vasculitis affects males and females in equal numbers. It affects children as well as adults. CNV is more common than the other inflammatory vascular disorders. The results of a skin biopsy demonstrate the presence or absence of CNV. Since a number of the more severe vasculitides involve the skin as well as other organ systems, additional tests of other organs must be prescribed in order to be sure that CNV is limited to the skin.