

Sweet syndrome is a rare disorder characterized by fever and the sudden onset of a rash, which consists of multiple tender, red or bluish-red bumps or lesions. These lesions usually occur on the arms, legs, trunk, face or neck. In some cases, additional systems of the body can become involved including the musculoskeletal system such as inflammation of the joints (arthritis), the eyes such as inflammation of the conjunctiva or the membrane that lines the eyes (conjunctivitis), and the internal organs. In the majority of affected individuals, the disorder occurs by itself for no known reason (idiopathic Sweet syndrome); this is also known as classical Sweet syndrome. Less often, the disorder can be associated with an underlying cancer (malignancy), usually a blood (hematologic) cancer such as certain types of leukemia; this is known as malignancy-associated Sweet syndrome. The disorder can also result as a reaction to taking certain drugs, especially a drug known as granulocyte-colony stimulating factor; this is known as drug-induced Sweet syndrome. Sweet syndrome is treated with corticosteroids. Classical Sweet syndrome in adults affects women more often than men by as much as 15:1 by some estimates. This female preponderance has not been seen in malignancy-associated or drug-induced Sweet syndrome. Classical Sweet syndrome usually affects women between the ages of 30-50, but can be seen in individuals of any age including children. There is no gender predominance seen in children. Several hundred individuals of Sweet syndrome have been reported in the medical literature. Only approximately 80 children have been reported in the medical literature. A diagnosis of Sweet syndrome is made based upon a thorough clinical evaluation, a detailed patient history, identification of classic symptoms, and a variety of specialized tests. In many cases, surgical removal (biopsy) and microscopic examination of small samples of skin tissue may reveal the infiltrate of neutrophils in the dermis. A complete blood cell count may also show neutrophils in the blood (neutrophilia).