

Erythema multiforme (EM) is the name applied to a group of hypersensitivity disorders, affecting mostly children and young adults, and characterized by symmetric red, patchy lesions, primarily on the arms and legs. The cause is unknown, but EM frequently occurs in association with herpes simplex virus, suggesting an immunologic process initiated by the virus. In half of the cases, the triggering agents appear to be medications, including anticonvulsants, sulfonamides, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and other antibiotics. In addition, some cases appear to be associated with infectious organisms such as *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* and many viral agents. Erythema multiforme is a rare disorder that affects slightly more males than females. It may begin at any age, but is most common in children and young adults. Usually, the diagnosis can be made on the basis of the size, shape, color and distribution of the target lesions.