



Why the sunflower?

To raise awareness about the condition, Scleroderma Australia has adopted the sunflower as the national icon.

The sunflower is symbolic, as, like the sunflower which turns towards the sun for warmth, people with scleroderma are usually more comfortable in warmer weather.

Send your application form to:
SCLERODERMA VICTORIA INC
2ND FLOOR, DALY WING
ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL,
41 VICTORIA ST. FITZROY. 3065
For further information contact:

Phone: (03) 9288 3651
www.sclerodermavictoria.com.au
email: enq@sclerodermavictoria.com.au



Knowing About Scleroderma

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scleroderma victoria

What is Scleroderma?

Scleroderma is a chronic connective tissue disease and is generally classified as one of the auto-immune rheumatic diseases.

To grasp some idea of this disease it is helpful to understand the origin of the word. 'Scleroderma' is Greek – 'sclero' meaning hard and 'derma' meaning skin. It is where the body's immune system does not adequately protect the connective tissues – that is, the tissues that hold the muscles, blood vessels, fat and skin together.

The pattern of the disease is also unusual in that it affects people in many different ways and the range and extent of symptoms may vary from one person to another.

In Scleroderma, the tissue is replaced by a type of scar tissue called fibrosis. Because connective tissue occurs throughout the whole body, this disease affects many and various organs and can produce a wide range of symptoms.

The following is a list of the most common symptoms, but it must be stressed that some people will experience very few of these, while others may experience more.

- Thickening of the skin which may occur in patches or may affect all of the fingers or toes or face. Rarely, it may involve an extensive part of the body
- Reflux oesophagitis and peptic ulceration causing indigestion and heartburn
- Colour changes in the hands and feet, usually on exposure to the cold. This is called Raynaud's phenomenon
- Prominent capillaries can occur over the face and fingers
- Chilblains or, in extreme cases, ulceration of fingers or toes
- Little nodules of calcium deposited on the fingertips and over bones.
- Dryness of eyes, mouth and vagina.

- Stiffness in the muscles and joints may occur as the tendons and joint linings become thickened.
- The wall of the bowel may thicken causing diarrhoea or constipation.
- Tissues in the lung may thicken, causing shortness of breath.
- Internal organs such as lung, heart and kidney may be affected.

Note: it is important that if you experience any of these symptoms that you see your medical practitioner.

Aims of Scleroderma Victoria

As with anyone with a chronic disease the opportunity to meet with others in similar circumstances is extremely helpful and for this reason Scleroderma Victoria was established. Our organisation is run by volunteers under the following mission statement:

- To provide support to those living with Scleroderma, their families, carers and friends
- To promote community awareness of Scleroderma
- To encourage and support research into Scleroderma

Activities conducted by Scleroderma Victoria include:

- Maintenance of support groups located throughout Victoria
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Facilitating Information Seminars
- Operating the Scleroderma Victoria office with the assistance of volunteers
- Scleroderma Victoria website
- Fundraising activities
- Awareness and promotional activities

When joining Scleroderma Victoria you automatically become a member of Scleroderma Australia.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Title_____ Family Name_____

Given Names_____

Address_____

_____ Post Code_____

Tel_____

Date of Birth _____

Email address _____

My interest is as follows:

I have scleroderma

I have a friend/relative with scleroderma

SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS

Annual Subscription (Inc. GST)

Full: \$27.50 \$_____

Concession: \$16.50 \$_____

(Pensioner/Student No) _____

Donation: \$_____

(Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible)

TOTAL: \$_____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Cheque (made payable to Scleroderma Victoria Inc.)

Money Order

Credit Card (complete details below)

Mastercard Visa Expiry Date ____/____

_____/_____/_____/____

Credit Card No.

Cardholder's name _____

Signature _____