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By Chris Tighe at 1:03 pm, Oct 26, 2016

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By Mayo Clinic Staff

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Scleroderma (skleer-oh-DUR-muh) is a group of rare diseases that involve the hardening and tightening of the skin and connective tissues — the fibers that provide the framework and support for your body.

In some people, scleroderma affects only the skin. But in many people, scleroderma also harms structures beyond the skin — such as blood vessels, internal organs and the digestive tract. Signs and symptoms vary, depending on which structures are affected.

Scleroderma affects women more often than men and most commonly occurs between the ages of 30 and 50. While there is no cure for scleroderma, a variety of treatments can ease symptoms and improve quality of life.

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