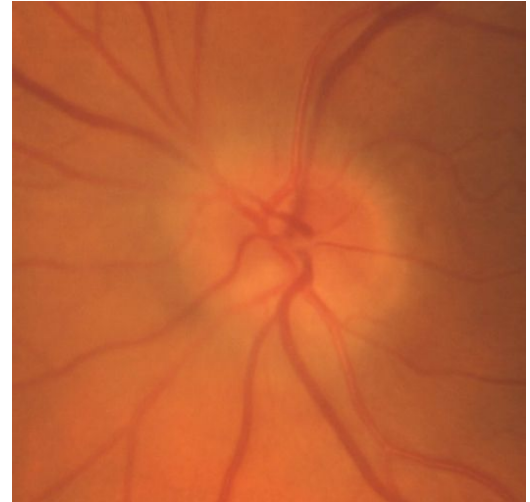




Quick Facts About Giant Cell Arteritis

What Is Giant Cell Arteritis?

- Giant cell arteritis (GCA), also known as temporal arteritis, is a disease of inflamed blood vessels in the body (vasculitis).
- GCA primarily affects older people, typically around the age of 70. It is extremely rare in people younger than 50.
- The cause of GCA is unknown. It is thought to be an autoimmune disease, meaning the inflammation is caused by the body's own immune system.
- GCA is usually diagnosed based on symptoms, blood tests, and a temporal artery biopsy.



*A swollen optic nerve due to GCA
Courtesy of James C. O'Brien, M.D.*

How Can Giant Cell Arteritis Affect Me?

- GCA can cause permanent vision loss or stroke due to loss of blood flow to the eye or brain.
- Double vision can also occur due to poor blood flow to the eye muscles.
- Severe cases of GCA may damage the blood vessels of the heart, chest, and abdomen.

What Should I Do About Giant Cell Arteritis?

- A **neuro-ophthalmologist** performs a dilated eye exam. Additional diagnostic testing is often recommended.
- GCA is treated primarily with corticosteroids to suppress the immune system and inflammation.
- Patients should be seen regularly by their primary care physician or a rheumatologist (a specialist of inflammatory diseases).

<https://www.nanosweb.org/gca>

