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## FACT SHEET

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Scleroderma is a chronic, autoimmune connective tissue disease whose symptoms typically include some or all of the following: sensitivity to cold in fingers and hands, thickening of the skin, shortness of breath, difficulty swallowing, joint stiffness and pain and damage to internal organs.

Autoimmune diseases, which affect more than 50 million Americans, are the third leading cause of death in the United States.

300,000 cases of scleroderma are estimated in the United States. 80% of patients are female. Thousands are affected right here in the state of Michigan.

Scleroderma typically strikes between the ages of 25 and 55.

95% of scleroderma cases begin with Raynaud's phenomenon (hands and feet abnormally sensitive to cold).

Federal research funding for scleroderma lags behind other diseases of similar prevalence.

In 2006, the Scleroderma Foundation granted over \$1 million in research grants to the medical community.

Misdiagnosis is common. It can take three years or more for an individual to be diagnosed and receive appropriate treatment, often due to lack of familiarity with the disease among medical professionals.

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### THE SCLERODERMA FOUNDATION IS HERE TO HELP!

We Are:

A national nonprofit organization that provides patient support, public education and research funding

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A member of the National Organization of Rare Disorders

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A member of the Coalition Skin Disease Research

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A member of the NIAMS Coalition

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A member of the National Coalition of Auto-Immune Patient Groups

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A member of the Women's Health Research Coalition