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Limb Pain Syndromes

Version of 2016

4. Erythromelalgia

4.1 What is it?

It is also called "erythermalgia". The name for this condition derives from 3 Greek words: erythros (red), melos (limb) and algos (pain). It is extremely uncommon, although it may run in families. Most children are around 10 years of age when they start presenting complaints. It is more frequent in girls.

The complaints include a burning sensation with warm, red and swollen feet or, less commonly, hands. The symptoms worsen upon exposure to heat and are relieved by cooling the extremity, to the point that some children refuse to remove their feet from ice-cold water. The course is unrelenting. Avoiding heat and vigorous exercise seem the most useful control measures.

Many different drugs can be used in an attempt to relieve pain, including anti-inflammatory drugs, pain killers and drugs for improving blood circulation (called "vasodilators"); a physician will prescribe what is most appropriate for each child.