

APS Support UK is a national charity which aims to improve the lives of patients by achieving earlier diagnosis and the best possible treatment through awareness, education and research

HOW WE HELP PATIENTS

WE offer support and information to those affected by APS

WE raise awareness in the medical community

WE fund a Royal College of GPs education programme to help GPs and health professionals diagnose APS

WE fund research into APS

WE maintain a free directory on our website with over 130 APS specialists listed throughout the UK

WE regularly update our website, compiled with leading APS experts, which has details of symptoms, treatment, and practical advice on living with the condition

To find out how to support the work of APS Support UK, please contact us or click on **Join Us** on our website.

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“Earlier diagnosis and treatment of this common blood condition could prevent heart attack, stroke, DVT and miscarriage.”

Clinical Services Journal



Antiphospholipid syndrome (APS) is an autoimmune disease which causes the blood to clot too quickly both in veins and arteries.

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WHAT IS ANTIPHOSPHOLIPID SYNDROME (APS)?

Antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), sometimes known as 'sticky blood' or Hughes syndrome, is an autoimmune disease which affects the blood and its ability to clot. An overactive immune system produces antiphospholipid antibodies (aPL) which cause the blood to clot too quickly in the veins and arteries.



More women than men are affected by APS with the majority of patients aged between 20 and 50, although any age group can be affected.



APS causes approximately 15% of strokes, heart attacks and DVTs in the under 50s. In pregnancy, APS is the most important treatable cause of recurrent miscarriage.



APS is a significantly under-recognised condition and, on average, it takes a person three years to be diagnosed.

Despite being a potentially life-threatening condition, the general outlook for most APS patients is good. Being diagnosed as early as possible and treated correctly seems to have a direct bearing on how well patients will feel in the future. Generally, the majority of patients can lead a relatively normal life provided they continue with their medication.

HOW CAN ANTIPHOSPHOLIPID SYNDROME AFFECT YOU?

APS can cause three main types of symptoms:

- Low-grade symptoms
- Symptoms in pregnancy
- Symptoms due to blood clots

The typical low-grade symptoms of APS include:

- Headaches and migraines
- Memory problems
- Cognitive (thought) difficulties
- Dizziness and balance problems
- Joint pain
- Fatigue

It is important to remember that these non-specific low-grade symptoms often occur in patients without APS. Also, a headache or feelings of tiredness in a person with APS may not be due to the syndrome itself.

In pregnancy, APS is the most important treatable cause of recurrent miscarriage, and is also associated with other complications such as pre-eclampsia, premature birth, small babies and stillbirth.

With APS, the blood clotting can affect any vein, artery or organ in the body but the commonest symptoms are:

- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- Pulmonary embolism (PE) or blood clot on the lung
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Transient ischaemic attack (TIA)