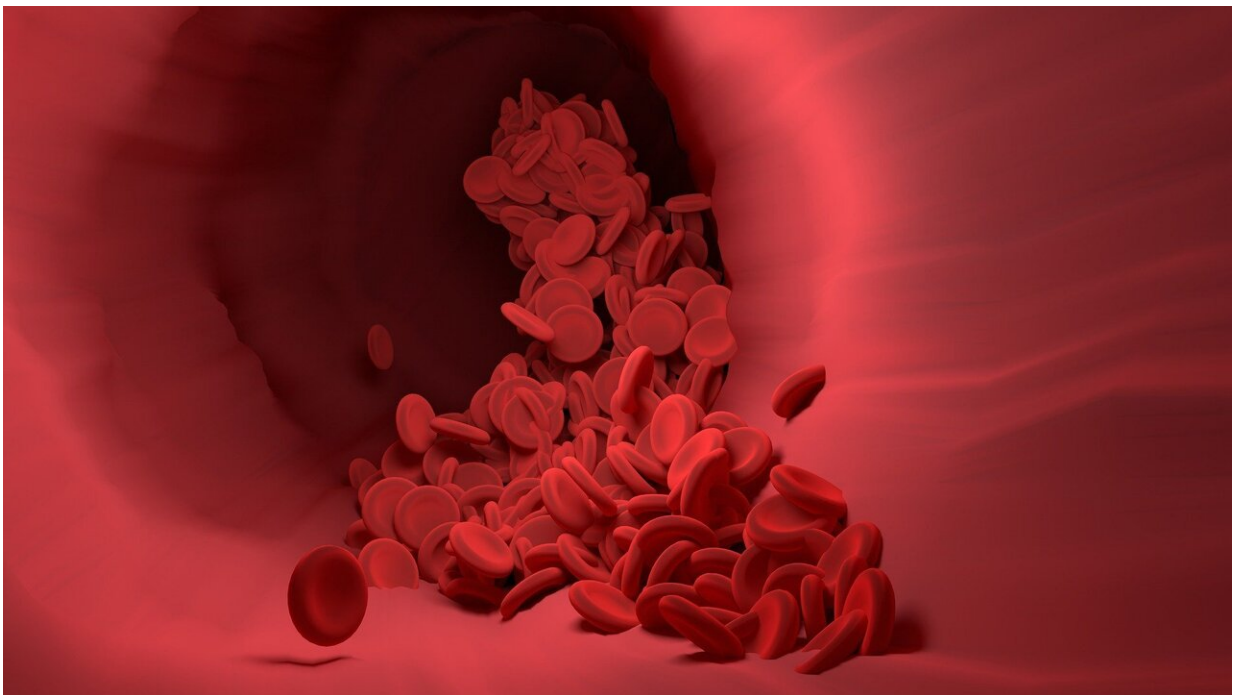# What is vasculitis? What to know about disorder that 'knocked out' Ashton Kutcher's vision

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Ashton Kutcher has revealed he was diagnosed with vasculitis, saying there was a time he was unsure if he would ever be able to see, hear or walk again.

In an upcoming episode of National Geographic's "Running Wild with Bear Grylls: The Challenge," which Access Hollywood published an exclusive clip of, Kutcher told Grylls "Like two years ago, I had this weird, super rare form of vasculitis, that like knocked out my vision, it knocked out my hearing, it knocked out like all my equilibrium."

The 44-year-old actor added that it took approximately a year to recover and that he considers himself "lucky to be alive."

But what is vasculitis? What are the symptoms? Here's what you need to know.

What is vasculitis?

Vasculitis is an autoimmune disorder that involves "inflammation of the blood vessels," according to the Mayo Clinic. The inflammation can lead to the walls of blood vessels thickening, blood flow being restricted and organ and tissue damage.

If a person has an autoimmune disorder, that means their immune system attacks their body instead of protecting it, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Common autoimmune diseases include lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and Crohn's disease.

There are multiple kinds of vasculitis, which can affect one organ or several in a person's body. The condition can be temporary or long lasting, depending on the type of vasculitis and other individual health considerations.

What are the types of vasculitis?

Some types of vasculitis, according to the Mayo Clinic, include:

- Behcet's disease
- Buerger's disease
- Churg-Strauss syndrome
- Cryoglobulinemia
- Giant cell arteritis
- Granulomatosis with polyangiitis
- Henoch-Schonlein purpura
- Kawasaki disease
- Takayasu's arteritis

What are the symptoms of vasculitis?

The symptoms of vasculitis can depend on the blood vessels that are affected, according to the Johns Hopkins Vasculitis Center. But many patients with vasculitis experience:

- Fevers
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- A rapid pulse
- Pain from skin ulcers, insufficient blood to the gastrointestinal tract and more.

Other patients may have skin rashes, dark or bloody urine, cough or shortness of breath and more, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

Some people with vasculitis may also experience dizziness, ringing in the ears, hearing loss and double vision or temporary or permanent blindness, according to the Mayo Clinic. People may also experience numbness in their hands or feet.

What causes vasculitis?

The cause of different kinds of vasculitis is not fully known, according to the Mayo Clinic. But some types are linked to genetics, while others are caused by the immune system being triggered to attack blood vessel cells. Some of those triggers can include infections such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C, blood cancers and other immune system diseases such as lupus.

Vasculitis conditions can occur across age groups. Some primarily affect people over the age of 50, while some are more common in people under the age of 5, according to the Mayo Clinic.

How is vasculitis treated?

It depends on the kind of vasculitis a person is experiencing. People may be given corticosteroids or medications that suppress the immune system, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

Some people with vasculitis may require surgery, including if arteries become blocked.

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