

# SAMHS INFO BULLETIN

Compiled by Corporate Communication



## Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month: 01-30 September

Duchenne muscular dystrophy is an disorder that is inherited and involves rapidly-worsening muscle weakness. Symptoms appear usually before 6 years of age and may even appear as early as infancy.

### Typical symptoms include:

- Chronic Fatigue and Lack of Energy
- Extreme Muscular weakness which usually begins in lower extremities but can also occur in a milder form in other parts of the body such as the arms and neck
- Difficulty with running, jumping or hopping
- Falls frequently, lack of coordination
- Weakness which gradually progresses
- Trouble walking and ability to walk may be totally lost by age 12 and child may need wheelchair.

Muscular Dystrophy is a group of genetic, hereditary diseases that cause progressive muscle weakness. The many diseases grouped under this category cause symptoms such as progressive muscular wasting (weakness), poor balance, frequent falls, walking difficulty, waddling gait, calf pain, limited range of movement, muscle contractures, respiratory difficulty, drooping eyelids and scoliosis and the inability to walk. These symptoms can show up from infancy to middle age depending on the specific disease.

Muscular dystrophy doesn't have a cure. It is beneficial to lead an active life as this will strengthen the muscles and help prevent weakening. Although there are no cures certain devices have been known to help those with the disease. These devices include wheelchairs, braces, and surgically implanted braces.

Corticosteroids have been found effective in slowing muscular dystrophy to help relax muscles after contractions. Muscular dystrophy is a genetic disease and cannot be prevented. It can be slowed by leading an active life and doing physical therapy. Muscular dystrophy also has been found to cause behavior problems young boys, probably due to the stress they are under.

Although no psychological effects have been proven (other than behavior problems) those afflicted with this disease feel different, are more stressed than those without

the disease, are more likely to become depressed, and feel like they aren't worth as much as others.

Muscular dystrophy is a tragic disease that is seen often. Can you imagine never being able to run, play sports, or even walk correctly? If you know someone with this disease they need to be encouraged and made to feel valuable. Next time you see someone with muscular dystrophy say something positive to them and help make their day.

Approved by:

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