



Post-Polio Syndrome

Symptoms or Behaviors

- Depression
- Difficulty Swallowing (Dysphagia)
- Respiratory Problems, Age 12 and Older
- Scoliosis
- Sleep Apnea
- Muscle weakness
- Fatigue

About the Disorder

What is Post-Polio Syndrome?

Post-polio syndrome is an illness in the nervous system. It can arise 15 to 50 years after a person has polio. It affects a person's muscles and nerves. It causes a person to have low energy, fatigue, and muscle or joint pain. Having post-polio syndrome doesn't mean that a person has polio again. Unlike polio, post-polio syndrome does not spread from person to person.

Symptoms of post-polio syndrome tend to show up very slowly. The main symptoms are new muscle weakness, fatigue, and pain in the muscles and joints. Muscles that had nerve damage from polio may get weak and waste away because of post-polio syndrome. With post-polio syndrome, muscles that a person didn't realize had been affected by polio may have weakness. Some people with post-polio syndrome also have problems with swallowing, breathing, sleeping, and tolerating cold temperatures.

What causes Post-Polio Syndrome?

Post-polio syndrome most likely arises from the damage left over from having polio. The polio virus harms the nerves that control muscles, and it makes the muscles weak. If a person had polio, he/she may have gained back the use of his/her muscles. But the nerves that connect to the muscles could be damaged without a person knowing it. The nerves may break down over time and cause a person to have weak muscles again. Researchers are studying other possible causes of post-polio syndrome. One theory is that the immune system plays a role.

How is Post-Polio Syndrome treated?

Post-polio syndrome is a condition that a person may have for the rest of his/her life. The aim of treatment is to help a person control symptoms and learn ways to stay active in spite of his/her muscle weakness. A person can manage his/her symptoms with a balance of physical activity and rest, ice and heat, pain medicine, and a healthy diet. Some people use canes, braces, and physical therapy. All of these things can help a person stay active.

Educational Considerations

Some people experience PPS-related fatigue as a flu-like exhaustion that worsens as the day progresses. This type of fatigue can also increase during physical activity, and may cause difficulty with concentration and memory. Others experience muscle fatigue, a form of muscle weakness that increases with exercise and improves with rest. Muscles should not be overused. Curriculum modifications and adaptations should be made to meet students' needs, such as extended time, shortened assignments, and the assistance of a scribe. Affected students may also need to receive occupational therapy, physical therapy, and/or Developmental/Adaptive Physical Education during their school day. In addition, for some students with PPS, reliving their childhood experiences with polio can be a traumatic and even terrifying experience. Any mental health concerns should be addressed.

Resources

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
NIH Neurological Institute
P.O. Box 5801
Bethesda, MD 20824
www.nids.nih.gov
Voice: (800) 352-9424 or (301) 496-5751
TTY (for people using adaptive equipment): (301) 468-5981

Post-Polio Health International/
4207 Lindell Blvd.
#110
St. Louis, MO 63108-2930
info@post-polio.org
<http://www.post-polio.org>
Tel: 314-534-0475
Fax: 314-534-5070

March of Dimes Foundation
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605
askus@marchofdimes.com
<http://www.marchofdimes.com>
Tel: 914-428-7100 888-MODIMES (663-4637)
Fax: 914-428-8203

<http://www.webmd.com/brain/tc/post-polio-syndrome-topic-overview>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/post-polio-syndrome/DS00494>

http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.mtKZKgM WKwG/b.4453219/k.CE80/PostPolio_Syndrome.htm