Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Muscular Dystrophy

What is Muscular Dystrophy?

Muscular dystrophies are a group of muscle diseases caused by mutations in a person's genes. Over time, muscle weakness decreases mobility, making everyday tasks difficult. There are many kinds of muscular dystrophy, each affecting specific muscle groups, with signs and symptoms appearing at different ages, and varying in severity. Muscular dystrophy can run in families, or a person can be the first in their family to have a muscular dystrophy. There may be several different genetic types within each kind of muscular dystrophy, and people with the same kind of muscular dystrophy may experience different symptoms.

Muscular dystrophies are rare, with little data on how many people are affected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working to estimate the number of people with each major kind of muscular dystrophy in the United States.

Learn more about CDC's research on muscular dystrophy »

Kinds of Muscular Dystrophy

The information on this page is a brief overview of the major kinds of muscular dystrophy.

- Duchenne/Becker (DMD/BMD) +
- Myotonic (DM) +
- Limb-Girdle (LGMD) +
- Facioscapulohumeral (FSHD) +
- Congenital (CMD) +
- Distal (DD) +
- Oculopharyngeal (OPMD) +
- Emery-Dreifuss (EDMD) +

Connect with an organization that focuses on the type of muscular dystrophy affecting you or someone in your family.

Read about CDC's Muscular Dystrophy Surveillance Tracking and Research Network, known as MD STAR*net*.

Learn more about CDC's other muscular dystrophy projects.

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