

emotional problems associated with a child with a long-term disability is the constant knowledge of the ultimate outcome of the disease. These families encounter all of the manifestations of the child with a chronic fatal illness (see [Chapter 17](#)).

Nurses are especially valuable health professionals as they come to know the family and the family's challenges. Nurses can be alert to the problems and needs and make necessary referrals when supplementary services are indicated. The Muscular Dystrophy Association—USA\* has branches in most communities to assist families that have a member with MD.

## Acquired Neuromuscular Disorders

### Guillain-Barré Syndrome (Infectious Polyneuritis)

Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), also known as *infectious polyneuritis*, is an uncommon acute demyelinating polyneuropathy with a progressive, usually ascending flaccid paralysis. The hallmark of GBS is acute peripheral motor weakness. The paralysis usually occurs approximately 10 days after a nonspecific viral infection; GBS has also been reported after administration of certain vaccines (rabies, influenza, polio, and meningococcal) ([Sarnat, 2016c](#)). Several subtypes of GBS include acute inflammatory demyelinating neuropathy, acute motor axonal neuropathy, acute motor sensory axonal neuropathy, and Miller Fisher syndrome. Children are less often affected than adults; among children, those between 4 and 10 years old have higher susceptibility. The male-to-female ratio is reported to be 1.5 : 1. Two peak periods with an increased incidence of GBS have been identified: late adolescence and young adulthood.

Chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculoneuropathies (CIDPs) are chronic types of GBS that recur intermittently or do not improve over a period of months to years ([Sarnat, 2016c](#)). The following discussion focuses on GBS.

Congenital GBS is rare yet may occur in the neonatal period and consists of hypotonia, weakness, and decreased or absent reflexes. Maternal neuromuscular disease may or may not be present. Diagnosis is established by the same criteria as in older children,