

Discharge Instructions for Myasthenia Gravis



You've been diagnosed with myasthenia gravis. This is a disease that affects how nerve impulses are sent to the muscles. This causes the muscles to get weak. The muscle weakness often gets worse during activity. It gets better after rest. Here's what you can do to help yourself feel better.

Activity

There will be times when you have lots of energy. And there will be times when you feel very tired. This is normal. Changes in your energy level are common. Try these tips to help you deal with your daily activities:

- Plan your activities for the times when you have more energy. This is often in the morning. Or after a nap. You may have more weakness at the end of the day.
- Rest often during the day.
- Don't do tough exercise. Instead, take short walks spread out during the day. This will keep you fit. But it won't make you tired.
- Do 1 thing at a time.
- Give yourself lots of time to get ready for appointments. Then you won't be rushed.
- Lay out your clothes in 1 place. This will save you energy while getting dressed. It will make it easier for you to reach everything. Try not to make extra trips back to your closet or your dresser.
- Put grab bars in your shower or tub. This will make it easier to get in and out. A shower chair may also help you.
- Sing and read out loud. This will keep your vocal cords strong.
- Add a voice amplifier to your phone. This will help others hear you better.

Medical care and support

- Take your medicine just as directed.
- Use prescribed eye drops for dry eyes. Dry eyes and other eye problems are common with myasthenia gravis.
- Make regular follow-up visits with your provider.
- Check with your provider before you start any new medicines.
- Wear a medical ID bracelet. Make sure it shows you have myasthenia gravis.
- Join a support group. Ask your provider about groups near you.

Other self-care

- Protect yourself from infection. To do this:
 - Wash your hands often. Try not to touch your face. Most germs are spread by hand-to-mouth contact.

- Get a flu shot each year. Some vaccines may not be safe if you're taking medicine to suppress your immune system. Ask your provider about pneumonia and other vaccines.
 - Stay out of crowds. This is even more important in the winter. That's when more people have colds and the flu.
- Don't drink alcohol. It can increase weakness.
- Learn the side effects of your medicines. You may need to be watched for side effects.
- See a dietitian. During longer times of weakness, you may need to change your diet. This is to prevent choking. A dietitian can help you plan for these times. These tips should also help:
 - Eat soft foods. This includes foods like mashed potatoes or applesauce. These can be easier to swallow.
 - Eat warm (not hot) foods.
 - Eat slowly. Cut solid foods into small pieces. Chew them fully before swallowing.

Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your provider right away if you have any of these:

- Trouble swallowing, chewing, speaking, or breathing
- Weakness in your face
- Excessive sweating
- Drooling
- Dizziness or confusion
- Extreme muscle weakness
- Double vision or blurred vision
- Stomach pain or diarrhea
- Shortness of breath that may get worse with exercise or lying flat

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