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## Friedreich Ataxia


Friedreich ataxia is an inherited disease that damages your nervous system. The damage affects your spinal cord and the nerves that control muscle movement in your arms and legs. Symptoms usually begin between the ages of 5 and 15. The main symptom is ataxia, which means trouble coordinating movements. Specific symptoms include:

- Difficulty walking
- Muscle weakness
- Speech problems
- Involuntary eye movements
- Scoliosis (curving of the spine to one side)
- Heart palpitations, from the heart disease which can happen along with Friedreich ataxia

People with Friedreich ataxia usually need a wheelchair 15 to 20 years after symptoms first appear. In severe cases, people become incapacitated. There is no cure. You can treat symptoms with medicines, braces, surgery, and physical therapy.

*NIH: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke*


### Start Here

- [Friedreich Ataxia \[https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/friedreich-ataxia\]](https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/friedreich-ataxia)  
 (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/es/health-information/disorders/ataxia-de-friedreich>]
- [Friedreich's Ataxia \(FA\) \[https://www.mda.org/disease/friedreichs-ataxia\]](https://www.mda.org/disease/friedreichs-ataxia) (Muscular Dystrophy Association)


### Diagnosis and Tests

- [Electromyography \(EMG\) and Nerve Conduction Studies \[https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/electromyography-emg-and-nerve-conduction-studies/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/electromyography-emg-and-nerve-conduction-studies/)  (National Library of Medicine)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/electromiografia-y-estudios-de-conduccion-nerviosa/>]
- [Friedreich's Ataxia \(FA\): Diagnosis \[https://www.mda.org/disease/friedreichs-ataxia/diagnosis\]](https://www.mda.org/disease/friedreichs-ataxia/diagnosis) (Muscular Dystrophy Association)
- [Functional MRI \(fMRI\) \[https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/fmribrain\]](https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/fmribrain)  
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/fmribrain>]


### Related Issues

- [Ataxias and Cerebellar or Spinocerebellar Degeneration \[https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/ataxia-and-cerebellar-or-spinocerebellar-degeneration\]](https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/ataxia-and-cerebellar-or-spinocerebellar-degeneration)  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)  
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.ninds.nih.gov/es/trastornos/ataxias-y-la-degeneracion-cerebelosa-o-espinocerebelosa>]

## Genetics

- Friedreich ataxia: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/friedreich-ataxia>]  
 (National Library of Medicine)

## Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Friedreich Ataxia [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Friedreich+Ataxia%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: The clinical burden of Friedreich ataxia in the United States: A... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40614535>]
- Article: Stable Isotope Labeling in Bacteria Enables Characterization and Quantification of Frataxin... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40554456>]
- Article: Friedreich's ataxia-a rare multisystem disease. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40541211>]
- Friedreich Ataxia -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Friedreich+Ataxia%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

## Find an Expert

- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/>] 

## Patient Handouts

- Friedreich ataxia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001411.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001411.htm>]



### MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Friedreich ataxia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001411.htm>]

### Related Health Topics

Degenerative Nerve Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/degenerativenervediseases.html>]

The primary NIH organization for research on *Friedreich Ataxia* is the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>]

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