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Cushing's Syndrome

Also called: Hypercortisolism

Cushing's syndrome is a hormonal disorder. The cause is long-term exposure to too much cortisol, a hormone that your adrenal gland makes. Sometimes, taking synthetic hormone medicine to treat an inflammatory disease leads to Cushing's. Some kinds of tumors produce a hormone that can cause your body to make too much cortisol.

Cushing's syndrome is rare. Some symptoms are:

- Upper body obesity
- Thin arms and legs
- Severe fatigue and muscle weakness
- High blood pressure
- High blood sugar
- Easy bruising

Lab tests can show if you have it and find the cause. Your treatment will depend on why you have too much cortisol. If it is because you have been taking synthetic hormones, a lower dose may control your symptoms. If the cause is a tumor, surgery and other therapies may be needed.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here

- Cushing Syndrome [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/hormonal-and-metabolic-disorders/adrenal-gland-disorders/cushing-syndrome>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
- Cushing's Syndrome [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/endocrine-diseases/cushings-syndrome>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Symptoms

- What Are the Symptoms of Cushing's Syndrome? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/cushing/conditioninfo/symptoms>]  (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/cushing/informacion/sintomas>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Adrenocorticotropic Hormone (ACTH) [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/adrenocorticotropic-hormone-acth/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/hormona-adrenocorticotropica-acth/>]
- Cortisol Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/cortisol-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-cortisol/>]
- How Do Health Care Providers Diagnose Cushing's Syndrome? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/cushing/conditioninfo/diagnosis>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Is There a Cure for Cushing's Syndrome? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/cushing/conditioninfo/cure>]
 (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/cushing/informacion/cura>]
- What Are the Treatments for Cushing's Syndrome?
[<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/cushing/conditioninfo/treatments>]
 (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/cushing/informacion/tratamientos>]

Related Issues

- Other Cushing's Syndrome FAQs [https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/cushing/more_information/other_faqs]
 (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/cushing/informacion/preguntas>]

Specifics

- What Causes Cushing's Syndrome? [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/cushing/conditioninfo/causes>]
 (Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/salud/temas/cushing/informacion/causas>]

Genetics

- Cushing disease: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/cushing-disease>]
 (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials

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

Journal Articles

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

- Article: Improved noninvasive diagnostic evaluations in treatment-naïve adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH)-dependent Cushing's syndrome. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40597717>]
- Article: Diagnosis of Cushing's syndrome with generalized linear model and development of... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40550094>]
- Article: Is Ectopic Cushing Syndrome Commonly Associated with Small Cell Lung Cancer... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40314800>]
- Cushing's Syndrome -- see more articles [[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Cushing+Syndrome%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%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+\]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Cushing+Syndrome%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%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+)

Reference Desk

- Endocrine System [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/endocrine.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/endocrine.html>]

Find an Expert

- Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/>]

- Find an Endocrinologist [<https://www.endocrine.org/patient-engagement/find-an-endocrinologist-directory>] (Endocrine Society)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] NIH

Children

- Cushing Syndrome (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cushing-syndrome.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/cushing-syndrome.html>]

Patient Handouts

- ACTH blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003695.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003695.htm>]
- Cortisol urine test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003703.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003703.htm>]
- Cushing disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000348.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000348.htm>]
- Cushing syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000410.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000410.htm>]
- Cushing syndrome due to adrenal tumor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000407.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000407.htm>]
- Dexamethasone suppression test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003694.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003694.htm>]
- Ectopic Cushing syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000406.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000406.htm>]
- Exogenous Cushing syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000389.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000389.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- 17-hydroxycorticosteroids urine test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003459.htm>]
- ACTH blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003695.htm>]
- Cortisol blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003693.htm>]
- Cortisol urine test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003703.htm>]
- Cushing disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000348.htm>]
- Cushing syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000410.htm>]
- Cushing syndrome due to adrenal tumor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000407.htm>]
- Dexamethasone suppression test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003694.htm>]

Ectopic Cushing syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000406.htm>]

Exogenous Cushing syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000389.htm>]

Hump on upper back (dorsocervical fat pad) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003112.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Adrenal Gland Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/adrenalglanddisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Cushing's Syndrome* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

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