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Autonomic Nervous System Disorders

Also called: Dysautonomia

Your autonomic nervous system is the part of your nervous system that controls involuntary actions, such as the beating of your heart and the widening or narrowing of your blood vessels. When something goes wrong in this system, it can cause serious problems, including:

- Blood pressure problems
- Heart problems
- Trouble with breathing and swallowing
- Erectile dysfunction in men

Autonomic nervous system disorders can occur alone or as the result of another disease, such as **Parkinson's disease** [<https://medlineplus.gov/parkinsonsdisease.html>] , alcoholism and diabetes. Problems can affect either part of the system, as in complex regional pain syndromes [<https://medlineplus.gov/complexregionalpainsyndrome.html>] , or all of the system. Some types are temporary, but many worsen over time. When they affect your breathing or heart function, these disorders can be life-threatening.


Some autonomic nervous system disorders get better when an underlying disease is treated. Often, however, there is no cure. In that case, the goal of treatment is to improve symptoms.

NIH: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke


Start Here

- Autonomic Neuropathy [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/autonomic-neuropathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20369829?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/autonomic-neuropathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20369829?p=1>]
- Overview of the Autonomic Nervous System [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/brain-spinal-cord-and-nerve-disorders/autonomic-nervous-system-disorders/overview-of-the-autonomic-nervous-system>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/enfermedades-cerebrales-medulares-y-nerviosas/trastornos-del-sistema-nervioso-aut%C3%B3nomo/introducci%C3%B3n-al-sistema-nervioso-aut%C3%B3nomo>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Autonomic Testing [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/autonomic-testing/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/pruebas-autonomicas/>]

Learn More

- Recognizing POTS: Learn to Spot This Mysterious Condition [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2023/09/recognizing-pots>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/reconocer-el-pots>]





Specifics

- Central Hypoventilation Syndrome, Congenital, 1, with or without Hirschsprung Disease [https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/8535/congenital-central-hypoventilation-syndrome]  (Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center)
- Holmes-Adie Syndrome [https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/5749/holmes-adie-syndrome]  (Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center)
- Horner Syndrome [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/horner-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20373547?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Multiple System Atrophy [https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/multiple-system-atrophy]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
Also in Spanish [https://espanol.ninds.nih.gov/es/trastornos/atrofia-multisistemica]
- Orthostatic Hypotension (Postural Hypotension) [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/orthostatic-hypotension/symptoms-causes/syc-20352548?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/orthostatic-hypotension/symptoms-causes/syc-20352548?p=1]
- Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) [https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/postural-tachycardia-syndrome-pots]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Pure Autonomic Failure [https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/10428/pure-autonomic-failure/]  (Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center)

Genetics

- Autosomal dominant leukodystrophy with autonomic disease: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/autosomal-dominant-leukodystrophy-with-autonomic-disease]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Cold-induced sweating syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/cold-induced-sweating-syndrome]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Congenital central hypoventilation syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/congenital-central-hypoventilation-syndrome]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Dopamine beta-hydroxylase deficiency: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/dopamine-beta-hydroxylase-deficiency]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Familial dysautonomia: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/familial-dysautonomia]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Horner syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/horner-syndrome]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Multiple system atrophy: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/multiple-system-atrophy]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Orthostatic hypotension: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/orthostatic-hypotension]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Stüve-Wiedemann syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/stuve-wiedemann-syndrome]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Transthyretin amyloidosis: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/transthyretin-amyloidosis]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Triple A syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/triple-a-syndrome]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Tyrosine hydroxylase deficiency: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/tyrosine-hydroxylase-deficiency]  (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Autonomic Nervous System Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Autonomic+Nervous+System+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Hypotension, Orthostatic [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Hypotension,+Orthostatic%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Multiple System Atrophy [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Multiple+System+Atrophy%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Postural+Orthostatic+Tachycardia+Syndrome%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

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

- Article: Association between autonomic dysfunction and arterial stiffness in hypertensive patients. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40750917>]
- Article: Beyond the Surface: Investigating the Potential Mechanisms of Non-Motor Symptoms in... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40726281>]
- Article: Autonomic dysfunction in multiple system atrophy: from pathophysiology to clinical manifestations. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40719373>]
- Autonomic Nervous System Disorders -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Autonomic+Nervous+System+Diseases%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/>] 

Children

- Anisocoria and Horner's Syndrome [<https://www.aapos.org/glossary/anisocoria-and-horners-syndrome>]
(American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus)
- Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/pots.html>]
(Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/pots.html>]

Patient Handouts

- Autonomic neuropathy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000776.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000776.htm>]
- Multiple system atrophy - parkinsonian type [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000757.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000757.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Autonomic dysreflexia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001431.htm>]

Autonomic neuropathy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000776.htm>]

Familial dysautonomia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001387.htm>]

Horner syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000708.htm>]

Multiple system atrophy - parkinsonian type [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000757.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Fainting [<https://medlineplus.gov/fainting.html>]

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Neurologic Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/neurologicdiseases.html>]

Peripheral Nerve Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/peripheralnervedisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

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

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