

It is a group of similar diseases marked by: wasting and progressive weakness of the skeletal muscles (those that control body movement). It is a group of similar diseases marked by: wasting and progressive weakness of the skeletal muscles (those that control body movement). It is a group of similar diseases marked by: wasting and progressive weakness of the skeletal muscles (those that control body movement).



How is Muscular Dystrophy treated?

There is no cure, but patients may be made more comfortable by a combination of:

- Physical therapy
- Exercise programs
- Orthopaedic devices
- Surgery
- Drugs to relieve muscle stiffness.

What about the Future?

Hope for a cure lies in Medical Research.

Persons with Muscular Dystrophy can still enjoy and participate in all aspects of life.

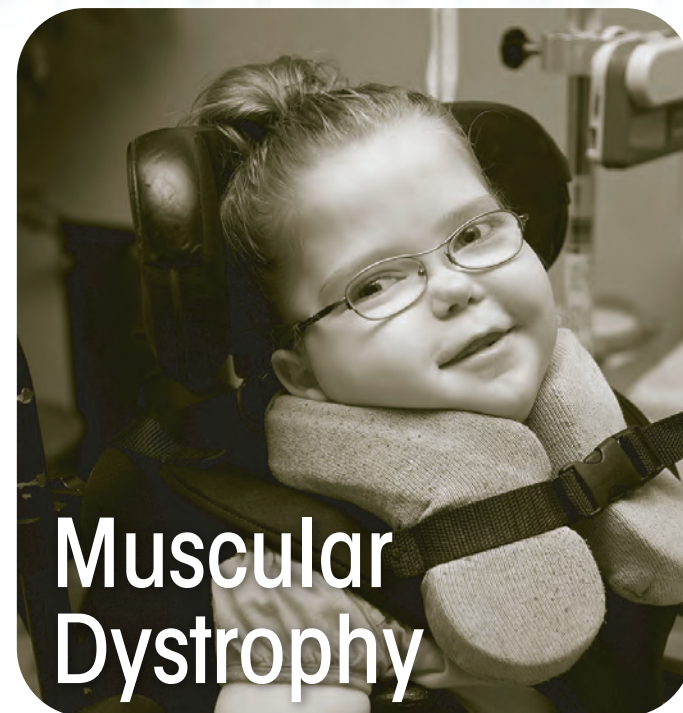


The Barbados Council for the Disabled is a national grouping of all organizations for and of persons with disabilities, dedicated to the health and well-being of its members and all other persons with disabilities in our society.

For additional information, contact:
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What is Muscular Dystrophy?

It is a group of similar diseases marked by:

wasting and progressive weakness of the skeletal muscles (those that control body movement)

Muscular dystrophy is Progressive. Symptoms gradually get worse as muscle wastes away.

There is NO CURE and no way to arrest the disease process.

Muscular dystrophy is inherited from a parent or parents through their genes but sometimes appear "out of the blue."

Genes are the "blue prints" for cell growth and activity. They direct the productivity of cell proteins. In muscular dystrophy the defective gene causes protein abnormalities, causing muscle cells to die.

Muscular dystrophy is not contagious

it can strike anyone, any race, at any time. Some forms develop in their teens, others in the twenties or even middle age.



Types of Muscular Dystrophy

There are four (4) main types of muscular dystrophy.

1 Duchenne (or Pseudo-hypertrophic) dystrophy. This begins in the large muscles of the lower trunk and upper legs. A waddling gait is present and there is difficulty running. Eventually the use of a wheel chair is required.

2 Facio-scapulo-humeral dystrophy. This begins in the muscles of face (facial), shoulder (scapulo) and upper arm (humeral). There is difficulty closing the eyes, raising the arms and lifting objects.

3 Limb girdle dystrophy. This begins in either shoulder muscles or muscles of the lower trunk and upper legs. Facial muscles are not affected. There is difficulty raising the arms and lifting objects. A waddling gait is present and there is difficulty rising from the floor or climbing stairs.

4 Myoclonic dystrophy There is weakness of fingers, hands, forearms, feet and lower legs. Facial weakness may be present as well as stiffness in hands and feet. Difficulty exists in relaxing grip, and walking. Eye cataracts may develop.

Other types include:



- a** Becker muscular dystrophy - similar to Duchenne but later in life and less severe).
- b** Congenital dystrophy - weakening and smallness of muscles obvious at birth.
- d** Oculopharyngeal dystrophy
 - usually appears in adulthood affects eye and throat.

How is Muscular Dystrophy detected?

- **electromyogram - small electrodes placed in the muscles may reveal a characteristic pattern.**
- **blood and urine tests.**
- **muscle biopsy - a small slice of muscle tissue is examined under a microscope.**

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