

Muscular Dystrophy (MD) Fact Sheets

MD:

- is a general term that refers to a group of genetic, hereditary diseases characterized by progressive weakness and degeneration of the skeletal muscles that control movement
- is a disorder that differs, depending on the form of MD, in: the distribution and extent of muscle weakness, the age of onset, rate of progression, prognosis and pattern of inheritance
- includes 9 diseases (see next page for specifics) that are always classified as muscular dystrophy and more than 100 diseases that have close similarities
- are multi-symptom disorders with manifestations in body systems including the heart, gastrointestinal and nervous systems, endocrine glands, skin, eyes and other organs

Potential Deficit Areas:

- Progressive muscular wasting (often affecting the pelvis and shoulders first)
- Impaired balance with frequent falls
- Impaired walking, waddling gait or inability to walk
- Calf pain
- Limited range of motion and contractures
- Scoliosis (curvature of the spine)
- Respiratory difficulty
- Drooping eyelids
- Mild mental retardation
- Some types of MD can affect the heart



Impact on Driving/Transportation:

- A wheelchair stowage lift or transfer seat may be helpful for a person who requires a scooter or wheelchair for mobility but can still transfer into a vehicle
- A person with some forms of muscular dystrophy may be able to drive with adaptive driving equipment; however, planning for future decreases in strength and function is necessary.
- Prior to driving with adaptive equipment, the person will need a driving evaluation (www.aded.net)
- This driving evaluation will determine if the individual will be able to drive or not and what if any type(s), of driving equipment they will need.
- A modified vehicle, most often a lowered floor minivan or full size van with a lift, may be needed for long-term transportation needs.

Possible Vehicle Equipment Needs:

- Wheelchair stowage lift and/or transfer seat
- Lowered floor minivan or full size van with a lift
- Adaptive driving equipment specifically recommended for their individual physical abilities and custom fit by a certified technician
- Equipment will vary widely person to person



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Types of Muscular Dystrophy:

Becker's:

- is a less severe variant of Duchenne MD
- caused by an insufficient amount of dystrophin, a protein that helps keep muscle cells intact
- onset is usually during adolescence or early adulthood
- progression slow and variable but can affect all muscle groups; most survive into mid or late adulthood

Congenital:

- is a class of muscular dystrophies that show themselves at or near the time of birth
- symptoms vary on the type, but may include muscle weakness, spinal curvature, respiratory insufficiency, mental retardation, eye defects or seizures
- is mostly slowly progressive, but some have a shortened life span

Duchenne:

- is the most common childhood form of MD and primarily affects boys
- is caused by an absence of dystrophin
- onset is between 2 and 6 years and the disease progresses rapidly
- is characterized by generalized weakness and muscle wasting, starting first at the hips and shoulders
- eventually affects all voluntary muscles, the heart and breathing muscles
- has a survival rate rarely beyond the early 30's

Distal:

- primarily effects the distal muscles (lower arms, hands, lower legs, feet)
- onset can range from childhood to adulthood
- has a slow progression and is not life threatening

Emery-Dreifuss:

- causes weakness and wasting of the shoulder, upper arm and calf muscles; joint stiffening; and fainting
- onset usually by 10 years of age
- Usually progresses slowly, with cardiac complications common and sometimes requiring a pace maker

Fasioscapulohumeral:

- causes weakness and wasting of the muscles around the eyes and mouth, shoulders, upper arms, and lower legs initially, with later wasting of the abdominal and hip muscles
- usually progresses slowly with some periods of rapid deterioration
- may span over many decades

Limb-girdle:

- causes weakness and wasting of the muscles around the shoulders and hips
- onset can range from childhood to adulthood
- usually progresses slowly with cardiac complications occurring in the later stages of the disease

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Types of Muscular Dystrophy:

Myotonic (also known as Steinert Disease):

- in the congenital form may appear at birth, more common form begins in the teen to early adult years
- causes general weakness and muscle wasting first affecting the face, lower legs, forearms, hands and neck
- delayed relaxation of muscle after contraction is common
- may also affect the gastrointestinal system, vision, heart or respiration
- may involve learning disabilities
- Has a slow progression, sometimes spanning 50-60 years

Oculopharyngeal:

- first causes weakness of the eyelids and throat muscles with facial and limb weakness often occurring later
- swallowing and difficulty keeping the eyes open are common problems
- does not usually occur until the 40 or 50's and has a slow progression



ABOUT RIDE-AWAY:

Ride-Away is America's largest provider of modified vehicles and adaptive equipment for people with disabilities. Ride-Away products are used by individuals with minor to profound disabilities requiring additional assistance while traveling and range from hand controls and lifts to raised door and lowered floor vehicle modifications. Founded in 1986, Ride-Away's 11 East Coast locations are committed to offering a broad selection of specialized vehicles and services to meet the needs of every customer. All of Ride-Away's locations are also QAP (Quality Assurance Program) certified through the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA), resulting in Ride-Away being held to the highest standards in the industry. For more information, call (888)-RIDE-AWAY or visit our website at www.Ride-Away.com.