

Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month: Let's take part



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Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month is a public health and awareness campaign held in September every year. It is for increasing awareness about muscular dystrophy and the importance of early intervention to improve the overall quality of life and prognosis of the patient. The public awareness campaign is also for advancing the search for better treatments so that, someday, the quality of life of people with muscular dystrophy and their loved ones

will significantly improve.

The term “muscular dystrophy” is broadly used but it includes a number of gene-related disorders that affect muscles throughout the body. There are dozens of specific genetic disorders that are categorized as muscular dystrophy. Most of these conditions are progressive and can cause the muscles to gradually get weaker over time. The condition can be inherited or occur without a family history. In muscular dystrophy, mutations or abnormal genes interfere with the production of certain proteins that are required for forming healthy muscle.

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Out of the more than 30 kinds of muscular dystrophy, the most common one that affects adults is myotonic muscular dystrophy. Half of all such cases are diagnosed in people under the age of 20. It can affect men and women, appearing any time from early childhood to adulthood.

For children, the most common form of muscular dystrophy is Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which only affects males. It usually appears between the ages 2 and 6. The condition causes a decrease in the size of muscles, resulting in gradual weakening.

Purpose of Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month

As the main goal of Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month is to raise awareness about the condition and improve the public's knowledge of it, here are some important facts about the condition:

- Muscular dystrophy is a group of more than 30 diseases.
- The average age at which the first symptoms become noticeable is 2.5 years.

- There is still no cure for muscular dystrophy, but medications and therapies can help manage symptoms and slow the progress of the disease.
- The disease doesn't just affect muscles, but also the brain, heart, throat, stomach, diaphragm, spine and intestines, so it can cause various medical problems.
- One in 3,500 males are born with Duchenne muscular dystrophy.
- Most children who have Duchenne muscular dystrophy will require a wheelchair by the time they are 12.
- The annual average cost for privately insured individuals in the U.S. with muscular dystrophy is \$18,930.
- The signs and symptoms differ from one type of muscular dystrophy to another.
- If you notice signs of muscle weakness, like increased clumsiness and frequent falls, you should seek medical advice immediately.

What you can do during Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month

People have very little knowledge of muscular dystrophy, and most aren't even aware that it includes more than 30 specific diseases. Muscular dystrophy is a serious disease that has a devastating impact on the patient and their loved ones. There is still a lot of room for research in the treatment of the disease, and this is where everyone can help. Among the actions you can take:

- Use social media to help spread awareness about muscular dystrophy.
- Donate to any organization connected to muscular dystrophy research to help in the advancement of treatments and the eventual discovery of a cure.
- Organize a fundraising activity in your community for muscular dystrophy research.
- Volunteer for the Muscular Dystrophy Association or any organization that supports muscular dystrophy patients.
- Urge your local radio/television stations to make a public service announcement about muscular dystrophy throughout September.
- Create a local organization for supporting muscular dystrophy patients and raising awareness all year round.

Everyone is encouraged to work together to increase awareness of the debilitating disease during Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month. Be sure to spread the word and participate in activities to help reach the goals of the public health and awareness campaign.