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Dystonias

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Dystonias Information Page](#).

The dystonias are movement disorders in which sustained muscle contractions cause twisting and repetitive movements or abnormal postures. The movements, which are involuntary and sometimes painful, may affect a single muscle; a group of muscles such as those in the arms, legs, or neck; or the entire body. Early symptoms may include deterioration in handwriting, foot cramps, or a dragging foot after running or walking some distance. Other possible symptoms are tremor and voice or speech difficulties. About half the cases of dystonia have no connection to disease or injury and are called primary or idiopathic dystonia. Of the primary dystonias, many cases appear to be inherited. Dystonias can also be symptoms of other diseases, some of which may be hereditary. Dystonia can occur at any age, but is often described as either early, or childhood, onset versus adult onset.