Rett Syndrome

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). Rett Syndrome Information Page.

Rett syndrome is a rare childhood neurological and developmental disorder that almost exclusively affects females. Infants appear to develop normally for the first several months before development stalls (typically between the ages of 6-18 months). Early symptoms include:

- loss of muscle tone
- slowing of development
- difficulty feeding
- jerkiness in arm and leg movement
- reduced eye contact and eye gaze.

The child then begins to lose or have regression of previously gained skills, including:

- the ability to socialize and speak
- purposeful use of the hands
- the ability to walk.

Other symptoms may include:

- slowed growth
- seizures
- intellectual disabilities
- problems with breathing
- scoliosis (curvature of the spine)
- behavioral problems.

Symptoms usually stabilize between ages 3-5 years. Social interactions continue to improve into adulthood but motor function and movement gradually decline and muscles become increasingly weak.