

HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE – RAISING AWARENESS

May is Huntington's Disease Awareness Month

Huntington's Disease (HD) is the Breakdown of Nerve Cells in the Brain

Huntington's Disease is a genetic neurological disorder that causes the progressive breakdown of nerve cells in the brain, which impairs a person's functional abilities, resulting in cognitive, motor and psychiatric disorders.

Every child of a parent with HD has a 50% chance of inheriting the gene that causes the disease. If the child has not inherited the gene, he or she will not develop the disease and cannot pass it on to their own children.

Please read and share this guide to help raise awareness about Huntington's Disease, including signs and symptoms, treatment and support options.

01 | Onset, Signs and Symptoms

Most people develop symptoms in their 30's or 40's; symptoms progressively worsen and include:

- Uncontrolled movements (chorea)
- Abnormal body posture
- Changes in behavior, emotions & cognition
- Impaired coordination
- Slurred speech
- Difficulty feeding & swallowing

When symptoms appear before age 20, the condition is called Juvenile Huntington's Disease. Symptoms differ and include unsteadiness, rigidity, seizures and difficulty at school.

02 | Treatment

Currently, there is no known cure for HD and no treatment that can stop or reverse the progression of the disease. However, there are medications that can help with symptoms such as chorea, hallucinations, depression and anxiety.

03 | Support

Due to the progressive nature of the disease, patients will eventually require assistance with daily activities and care. Therefore, it is important to create a supportive environment in the early stages of the disease.

In later stages of HD, professional care may be required, either at home or in a long-term facility.

- **Plan Ahead** – Start your search early for a facility that is familiar with Huntington's Disease.
- **Ask for Help** – There are social workers who have experience in finding long term care placement for people with HD. Reach out to your local social worker to find out how they can help.

For additional resources on awareness and living with Huntington's Disease, visit Huntington's Disease Society of America at: <http://hdsa.org/living-with-hd/>

Did You Know?
1 in 10,000 Americans have
Huntington's Disease

References

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/huntington/huntington.htm>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/huntingtons-disease/basics/definition/con-20030685>

<http://i.huffpost.com/gen/3018560/thumbs/o-HUNTINGTONS-DISEASE-570.jpg?4>