

Myasthenia Gravis: What You Need to Know



Myasthenia gravis is an autoimmune neuromuscular disease. It causes weakness in the skeletal muscles, which connect to the bones and support movement.

Myasthenia gravis can impede the muscles that we use to:

- Chew
- Look around
- Make facial expressions
- Swallow
- Talk



Symptoms of myasthenia gravis can include:

- Difficulty swallowing
- Double or blurred vision
- Drooping of one or both eyelids
- Feeling weakness in the limbs or neck
- Shortness of breath
- Speech problems

In severe cases, symptoms can be life-threatening. A myasthenic crisis is a medical emergency that causes the muscles responsible for breathing to become too weak to function without a ventilator.

Who can get myasthenia gravis?

Usually, males over age 60 and females under age 40, but it can occur at any age

There is no known cure, but treatments can control symptoms well.



What are the causes?

- Antibodies interrupting how nerve signals are transmitted to the muscles
- Problems with the thymus gland, which controls immune function

Treatments include:

- Surgery to remove the thymus gland
- Medications that suppress production of abnormal antibodies or stop antibodies from causing damage
- Drugs that improve neuromuscular transmission



If you're concerned about your risk of developing myasthenia gravis, find a doctor today at weillcornell.org/doctors