



## NINDS Myopathy Information Page

### Table of Contents (click to jump to sections)

- [What is Myopathy?](#)
- [Is there any treatment?](#)
- [What is the prognosis?](#)
- [What research is being done?](#)
- [Clinical Trials](#)
- [Organizations](#)



### What is Myopathy?

The myopathies are neuromuscular disorders in which the primary symptom is muscle weakness due to dysfunction of muscle fiber. Other symptoms of myopathy can include include muscle cramps, stiffness, and spasm. Myopathies can be inherited (such as the muscular dystrophies) or acquired (such as common muscle cramps). Myopathies are grouped as follows:

**congenital myopathies:** characterized by developmental delays in motor skills; skeletal and facial abnormalities are occasionally evident at birth  
**muscular dystrophies:** characterized by progressive weakness in voluntary muscles; sometimes evident at birth  
**mitochondrial myopathies:** caused by genetic abnormalities in mitochondria, cellular structures that control energy; include Kearns-Sayre syndrome, MELAS and MERRF  
**glycogen storage diseases of muscle:** caused by mutations in genes controlling enzymes that metabolize glycogen and glucose (blood sugar); include Pompe's, Andersen's and Cori's diseases  
**myoglobinurias:** caused by disorders in the metabolism of a fuel (myoglobin) necessary for muscle work; include McArdle, Tarui, and DiMauro diseases  
**dermatomyositis:** an inflammatory myopathy of skin and muscle  
**myositis ossificans:** characterized by bone growing in muscle tissue  
**familial periodic paralysis:** characterized by episodes of weakness in the arms and legs  
**polymyositis, inclusion body myositis, and related myopathies:** inflammatory myopathies of skeletal muscle  
**neuromyotonia:** characterized by alternating episodes of twitching and stiffness; and  
**stiff-man syndrome:** characterized by episodes of rigidity and reflex spasms  
**common muscle cramps and stiffness,** and  
**tetany:** characterized by prolonged spasms of the arms and legs

### Is there any treatment?

Treatments for the myopathies depend on the disease or condition and specific causes. Supportive and symptomatic treatment may be the only treatment available or necessary for some disorders. Treatment for other disorders may include drug therapy, such as immunosuppressives, physical therapy, bracing to support weakened muscles, and surgery.

### What is the prognosis?

The prognosis for individuals with a myopathy varies. Some individuals have a normal life span and little or no disability. For others, however, the disorder may be progressive, severely disabling, life-threatening, or fatal.

### What research is being done?

The NINDS supports and conducts an extensive research program on neuromuscular disorders such as the myopathies. Much of this research is aimed at increasing scientific understanding of these disorders, and finding ways to prevent, treat, and cure them.

### NIH Patient Recruitment for Myopathy Clinical Trials

- ▶ [At NIH Clinical Center](#)
- ▶ [Throughout the U.S. and Worldwide](#)
- ▶ [NINDS Clinical Trials](#)

## Organizations

[National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases \(NIAMS\)](#)  
 National Institutes of Health, DHHS  
 31 Center Dr., Rm. 4C02 MSC 2350  
 Bethesda, MD 20892-2350  
[NIAMSinfo@mail.nih.gov](mailto:NIAMSinfo@mail.nih.gov)  
<http://www.niams.nih.gov>  
 Tel: 301-496-8190 877-22-NIAMS (226-4267)

[Muscular Dystrophy Association](#)  
 3300 East Sunrise Drive  
 Tucson, AZ 85718-3208  
[mda@mdausa.org](mailto:mda@mdausa.org)  
<http://www.mda.org>  
 Tel: 520-529-2000 800-572-1717  
 Fax: 520-529-5300

## Related NINDS Publications and Information

- ▶ [NINDS Muscular Dystrophy Information Page](#)  
Muscular Dystrophy (MD) information sheet compiled by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).
- ▶ [NINDS Mitochondrial Myopathies Information Page](#)  
Mitochondrial myopathies information sheet compiled by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).
- ▶ [NINDS Dermatomyositis Information Page](#)  
Dermatomyositis information sheet compiled by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).
- ▶ [NINDS Inclusion Body Myositis Information Page](#)  
Inclusion Body Myositis (Inflammatory Myopathy) information sheet compiled by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).

Captured 2/24/2014

Prepared by:  
Office of Communications and Public Liaison  
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, MD 20892

NINDS health-related material is provided for information purposes only and does not necessarily represent endorsement by or an official position of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke or any other Federal agency. Advice on the treatment or care of an individual patient should be obtained through consultation with a physician who has examined that patient or is familiar with that patient's medical history.

All NINDS-prepared information is in the public domain and may be freely copied. Credit to the NINDS or the NIH is appreciated.

Last updated January 3, 2014

---

[National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#)  
[Home](#) | [About NINDS](#) | [Disorders A - Z](#) | [Research Funding](#) | [News From NINDS](#) | [Find People](#) | [Training](#) | [Research](#) | [Enhancing Diversity](#)  
[Careers@NINDS](#) | [FOIA](#) | [Accessibility Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Statement](#)



NIH...Turning Discovery Into Health®