

# LEARN MORE ABOUT CERVICAL DYSTONIA

**Dystonia** is a neurological disorder that can take several years to diagnose. Its similarity to other movement disorders, combined with its wide variety of symptoms, often leads to misdiagnoses and delays.

Without an accurate diagnosis and treatment, individuals affected by cervical dystonia may live with symptoms that affect their daily life.

**CERVICAL DYSTONIA**  
IS THE MOST  
COMMON FORM  
OF DYSTONIA.

*This guide was developed in collaboration with neurologist **Dr. Anne-Louise Lafontaine** as a tool to help you talk to your family doctor about cervical dystonia.*

## Do any of the following scenarios sound like your experience?\*

### CHECKLIST:

- The posture of your head is turned to face toward the left or right
- The angle of your head is tilted to the left or right
- Your shoulder is intermittently or constantly raised toward your ear
- Your head is tilted forward or backward
- It's difficult to move your head in the opposite direction
- It's difficult to hold your head in a straight-facing, middle position
- You experience pain and a pulling sensation in your head and/or neck
- It's challenging to perform household or work responsibilities due to muscle pain or postures
- Your ability to perform activities of daily living, like feeding, dressing, and washing, is impaired
- You find it difficult to drive or ride in a car due to head and neck posture
- You have difficulty reading or watching TV in a normal seated position
- It's difficult to engage in activities like shopping, walking, dining out, or recreational activities due to head and neck pain or postures

*\*These scenarios are not inclusive of all possible experiences with dystonia and relate primarily to cervical dystonia. Scenarios were adapted from the criteria on the Toronto Western Spasmodic Torticollis Rating Scale and Psychiatric Screening Tool by the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society.*

## If you checked off one or more of the scenarios above, discuss the following questions with your family doctor:

1. Can you explain what cervical dystonia is and how it differs from other types of muscle spasms?
2. Do you think my symptoms align with the diagnostic criteria for cervical dystonia?
3. What pain management options are available to me while I'm undergoing evaluation for a diagnosis?
4. Are there any exercises or other strategies I can use to reduce muscle spasms while I'm awaiting a diagnosis?

If you suspect that you or a loved one could be living with **cervical dystonia**, talk to your family doctor.

*The information presented here is intended for educational purposes only and is not meant to be a diagnostic tool. Always consult your healthcare provider for personalized guidance regarding your health.*



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