



# Guillain-Barré Syndrome

(Gee-Yah-Buh-Ray Syndrome)

Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) is a rare autoimmune disease in which the body attacks its own nerves.

It is usually characterized by tingling starting in the hands or feet and eventually spreading to the rest of the body. In serious cases, the disease is classified as a medical emergency as the patient's entire body becomes paralyzed. Recovery usually occurs after 2-3 weeks of the onset of the first symptoms, although recovery can last years and permanent nerve damage may occur. GBS has the potential to become fatal, although it is uncommon.

## Symptoms

- Paresthesia of the fingers, feet, ankles or wrists
- Unsteady gait
- Weakness in legs which spreads to upper body
- Difficulty breathing
- Tachycardia
- Bowel dysfunction

## Causes

- 2 in 3 individuals who contract GBS have diarrhea or respiratory illness spanning several weeks prior to the onset of GBS symptoms
- Prior infections with cytomegalovirus, Epstein Barr virus, Zika or other viral infections may be a symptom occurring before GBS diagnosis
- Although rare, GBS has developed in some individuals after receiving certain vaccines
- Infection by *Campylobacter jejuni* is a common cause of GBS. The bacteria causes diarrhea.

## Types

There are 3 main types of GBS:  
Acute inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculoneuropathy (AIDP)  
-Onset symptoms: muscle weakness in lower body spreading upward  
-Common in North America & Europe

Miller Fisher syndrome (MFS)  
-Onset symptoms: paralysis of eyes; unsteady gait  
-Most common in Asia

Acute motor axonal neuropathy (AMAN) & acute motor-sensory axonal neuropathy (AMSAN)  
-Common in China, Japan & Mexico

## Treatment

- PLASMA EXCHANGE, WHEREBY THE LIQUID PORTION OF BLOOD IS REMOVED
- HIGH-DOSE IMMUNOGLOBULIN THERAPY (ANTIBODY INFUSION)

NB: There is no known cure for GBS. Treatment is a means to ease symptoms and shorten the duration of the illness. Most individuals regain the ability to walk after 6 months, however some may suffer from lasting aftereffects like numbness or fatigue.

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## REFERENCES:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/guillain-barre-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20362793>

<https://www.cdc.gov/campylobacter/guillain-barre.html>