



Essential Tremor (ET)

Facts about Essential Tremor

ET is a neurological condition that causes shaking of the hands, head, and voice.

- ET can also cause legs and trunk to shake, and some people have a feeling of internal tremor.
- An estimated 10 million Americans have ET.
- Although there are many possible causes of tremor, ET is the most common. Still, misdiagnosis of tremor is a problem. According to the *Canadian Journal of Neuroscience*, general neurologists treating tremor have a diagnostic error rate of 25% to 35%.
- ET is often misdiagnosed as Parkinson's disease, yet according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, eight times as many people have ET as have Parkinson's.
- ET is not confined to the elderly. Children and middle-aged people can also develop ET. In fact, newborns have been diagnosed with the condition.
- There is evidence that ET is genetic. Each child of

a parent who has ET has a 50% chance of inheriting a gene that causes the condition. However, sometimes people with no family history of tremor develop ET.

- Few effective prescription medications are available for treating ET. Unfortunately, it is estimated that less than 60% of people with ET are helped by these medications.
- Researchers estimate that 4% to 5% of people age 40 to 60 have ET. The incidence rate for people age 60 and older is estimated at 6.3% to 9%.
- People who have ET become disabled at worst and feel frustrated or embarrassed at best.
- Quality of life is a big issue for people with ET. Daily activities such as feeding, drinking, grooming and writing become difficult if not impossible.
- Many people with ET are too embarrassed to go out in public and remain isolated in their homes, which can lead to depression.

Diagnosing ET - While there are no medical tests for ET, a movement disorder specialist can make a diagnosis. The doctor will conduct a neurological examination and evaluate symptoms in order to rule out other potential causes of tremor. To learn more review our "Patient Handbook".

When your child has ET - If you believe your child has ET, he/she should be examined by a pediatric movement disorder specialist. To learn more about children and ET, order the IETF's free guide for parents and teachers "Children with Essential Tremor: A guide for parents and other caring adults".

Coping with ET - Order the IETF's free flyer "Essential Tremor Coping Tips". Join an ET support group in your community. Stay connected with the latest information about ET by becoming a member of the IETF.

Call the IETF (toll free) at 888.387.3667 to request more information or visit our website, www.essentialtremor.org.



Our Mission:

The IETF funds research to find the cause of essential tremor (ET) that leads to treatments and a cure, increases awareness, and provides educational materials, tools, and support for healthcare providers, the public, and those affected by ET.