

## Fast Facts

### Huntington's Disease

- Caused by an inherited defect of a single gene
- Most genes, except the sex chromosomes, a person inherits two copies of every gene (one copy from each parent). If a parent has a defective copy of a gene, they have a 50% chance of passing it to each child
- Since a person needs only one copy of the defective gene to develop the disorder, it's an autosomal dominant disorder
- has a broad spectrum of symptoms across movement, cognitive, and psychiatric areas
- Symptoms appear when a person is in their 30s or 40s but can develop prior. If they appear earlier, it's called juvenile Huntington's disease, and symptoms are different and develop faster
- Symptoms can change throughout the illness

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Movement:</i>                      Involuntary jerking or writhing movements (chorea)                      Muscle problems, such as rigidity or muscle contracture (dystonia)                      Slow or abnormal eye movements                      Impaired gait, posture, and balance                      Difficulty with speech or swallowing</p> <p><i>Cognitive:</i>                      -Difficulty organizing/prioritizing/focusing on tasks                      -Lack of flexibility/the tendency to get stuck on a thought/behavior/action (perseveration)                      -Lack of impulse control that can result in outbursts/acting without thinking/sexual promiscuity                      -Lack of awareness of one's behaviors/abilities                      -Slowness in processing thoughts/finding words</p>	<p><i>Medications for Movement:</i>                      -Tetrabenazine                      -Dutetrabenazine,                      -Haloperidol                      -Fluphenazine                      -Risperidone                      -Olanzapine                      -Quetiapine                      -Amantadine                      -Levetiracetam                      -Clonazepam</p> <p><i>Medications for Psychiatric:</i>                      -Citalopram                      -Escitalopram                      -Fluoxetine                      -Sertraline                      -Quetiapine                      -Risperidone                      -Olanzapine                      -Divalproex                      -Carbamazepine                      -Lamotrigine</p> <p><i>Therapy:</i>                      -Psychotherapy                      -Speech therapy                      -Physical therapy                      -Occupational therapy</p> <p><i>Help with Eating:</i>                      -Remove distractions during meals</p>	<p>-See a genetic counselor if you or your partner has a family history of the disorder (can help guide you through prenatal testing or using in vitro fertilization)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Difficulty in learning new information</li> </ul> <p><i>Psychiatric:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Feelings of irritability/sadness/apathy</li> <li>-Social withdrawal</li> <li>-Insomnia</li> <li>-Fatigue/loss of energy</li> <li>-Frequent thoughts of death/dying/suicide</li> <li>-Obsessive-compulsive disorder</li> <li>-Mania</li> <li>-Bipolar disorder</li> </ul> <p><i>Juvenile Huntington's:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Difficulty paying attention</li> <li>-Rapid/significant drop in overall school performance</li> <li>-Behavioral problems</li> <li>-Contracted/rigid muscles that affect gait</li> <li>-Tremors/slight involuntary movements</li> <li>-Frequent falls/clumsiness</li> <li>-Seizures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Select foods that are easier to eat</li> <li>-Use utensils designed for those with limited fine motor skills</li> </ul> <p><i>End of Life Discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Care facilities (in-home, assisted living, or nursing home)</li> <li>-Hospice care</li> <li>-Living wills (clearly states the person's preferences when they can no longer make decisions)</li> <li>-Advance directives (enable an appointed person/persons to make decisions on your behalf for medical or financial matters or both)</li> </ul>	
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