

## gMG SIMPLE FACTSHEET



### A gMG FACTSHEET FOR FRIENDS, FAMILY, CO-WORKERS, EMPLOYERS OR OTHERS

**You have been given this factsheet because you know someone who has been diagnosed with generalised Myasthenia Gravis (gMG).**

This factsheet has been designed to help you better understand gMG.

### WHAT IS gMG?

gMG is a rare, chronic, neuromuscular autoimmune disease in which the muscles are attacked and damaged by the immune system.<sup>1-4</sup>

**g**eneralised  
affecting any muscle in the body

**M**YASTHENIA  
muscle weakness

**G**RAVIS  
severe

The term myasthenia gravis comes from a combination of Greek (mys = muscle, asthenia = weakness) and Latin (gravis = severe) terms meaning 'severe muscle weakness'. Generalised means affecting various muscle groups in the body.<sup>5</sup>

**gMG affects approximately 150 to 200 in one million people worldwide<sup>14</sup>**

### FLUCTUATING MUSCLE WEAKNESS

gMG is characterised by fluctuating muscle weakness, which often becomes worse with increasing muscle use.<sup>6-8</sup>

Symptoms of gMG may vary from patient to patient and even in the same patient, symptoms can fluctuate throughout the day, typically getting worse with activity and as the day progresses.<sup>6,9,10</sup>

### WHAT CAUSES gMG?

The normal function of the immune system is to fight off infections, but in gMG the immune system is mistakenly activated to attack the body's own cells, disrupting the communication between the nerves and muscles.<sup>10,11</sup>

In gMG the body produces specific proteins called autoantibodies, which can lead to activation of the complement system – a part of our immune system that normally helps fight disease by clearing up foreign molecules and damaged cells.<sup>6,12,13</sup>

However, in gMG, the complement activation instead causes damage to the body's own muscle cells.<sup>6,7</sup>

## SYMPTOMS OF gMG

In gMG, the symptoms are the result of weakness that can be seen in various muscle groups, such as the muscles in the face, the muscles which control eye movements, the muscles responsible for talking, chewing and swallowing, the muscles in the neck, the muscles needed to breathe and the muscles controlling movements.<sup>7,8,10</sup>



### GENERAL<sup>7</sup>

- Fatigue



### AXIAL MUSCLES<sup>7,8</sup>

- Weakness in the neck



### OCULAR MUSCLES<sup>7,8,10</sup>

- Droopy eyelids
- Double vision
- Difficulty closing the eyes



### RESPIRATORY MUSCLES<sup>8</sup>

- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing while lying flat
- Fast breathing
- Respiratory failure



### BULBAR MUSCLES<sup>7,8,10</sup>

- Slurred speech
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficulty speaking
- Jaw fatigue



### LIMB MUSCLES<sup>7,8,10</sup>

- Weakness in the arms, hands, fingers and legs



### FACIAL MUSCLES<sup>8</sup>

- Difficulty puffing out the cheeks
- Salivating

## gMG EXACERBATIONS

gMG symptoms are constantly fluctuating and external factors, such as an infection or emotional stress, can trigger exacerbations (worsening of symptoms).<sup>8,15,16</sup>

## gMG CAN RESULT IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

gMG can also lead to something called a myasthenic crisis, a serious complication of muscle weakness, which results in respiratory failure.<sup>17,18</sup> Because of the complications that may occur with gMG, it is important to seek medical care as quickly as possible.<sup>17,19</sup>

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