

DO YOU HAVE STIFF OR PAINFUL MUSCLE SPASMS?¹

If so, you may have spasticity.

Learn what may be causing it and find out how to talk to your doctor about managing your condition.

What is spasticity?

Spasticity is a health problem that makes your muscles feel more tense, tight or stiff than normal.¹ This can be painful or uncomfortable.¹ It can also make it difficult to move, talk, sleep or keep your balance.² Spasticity can disrupt your daily activities.²

Spasticity is usually caused by damage to your brain or spinal cord.³ Sometimes this damage is tied to another health problem, such as stroke, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy.¹ Together, your brain and spinal cord make up your central nervous system, which controls all of your body's movements.³ That is why spasticity can have such a big impact on your life.²

If you think you may have spasticity, talk to your doctor about how to best manage your symptoms.

Do you have spasticity?

If you think you might have spasticity, answer the questions below. If your symptoms make it difficult to write, ask a family member, friend or caregiver to help. Once completed, share your answers with your doctor. If your doctor diagnoses you with spasticity, talk with him or her about managing your symptoms.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Have you been diagnosed with any of the following health problems?¹

☐ No ☐ Yes (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Brain injury

☐ Cerebral palsy

☐ Multiple sclerosis

☐ Spinal cord injury

☐ Stroke

☐ Other _____

2. Do you take medicines for any of the health problems above? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, what medicine(s) do you take? _____

3. Do you have any of the following symptoms?³ (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Muscle cramps or constant, uncontrollable muscle tightening

☐ Trouble keeping your balance

☐ Muscle spasms or unintentional movements

☐ Trouble moving

☐ Trouble sleeping

☐ Overall weakness or any weak muscles

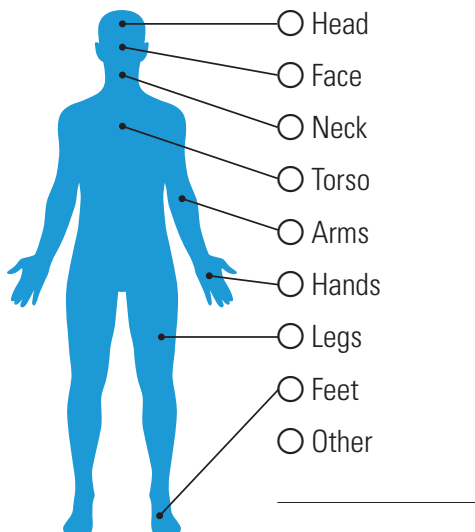
☐ Other _____

☐ Pain anywhere in your body

4. Have you been experiencing muscle cramps?¹

☐ No ☐ Yes

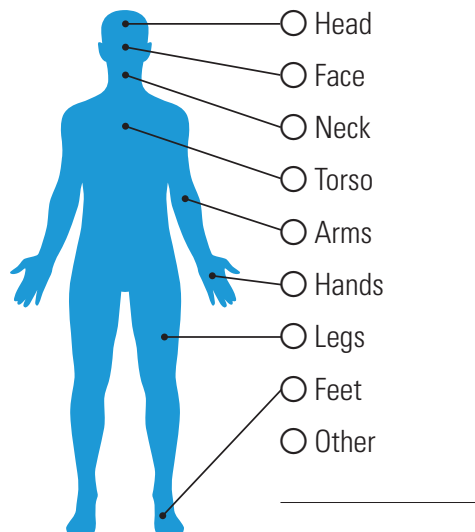
If yes, where? (Mark all that apply.)



5. Have you been experiencing muscle spasms?¹

☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, where? (Mark all that apply.)



6. Do you have difficulty with any of the following daily tasks?⁴ (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Doing household chores

☐ Drying yourself after bathing

☐ Getting in or out of bed

☐ Taking a shower or bath

☐ Walking

☐ Other _____

☐ Driving

☐ Getting dressed

☐ Getting in or out of the car

☐ Using the toilet

☐ Working

7. Have you experienced any of the following movement problems?² (Mark all that apply.)

☐ General movement problems

☐ Limited range of motion

☐ Resistance to movement

☐ Trouble relaxing

☐ Other _____

☐ Jerky movement

☐ No control over movement

☐ Trouble bending your limbs

☐ Trouble straightening your limbs

☐ None

8. How do your symptoms make you feel?²

☐ Annoyed

☐ Anxious

☐ Depressed

☐ Embarrassed

☐ Frustrated

☐ Nothing

☐ Sad

☐ Stressed

☐ Other _____

Symptoms of spasticity^{1,2}

While symptoms of spasticity may vary, some of the most common symptoms include:

STIFFNESS

Tightness or flexing of the muscles which may make it more difficult to move or perform daily activities.

PAIN

Stiffness and spasms can make your muscles hurt. Pain can also occur when your symptoms force you to sit or sleep in different positions.

SPASMS

When your muscle flexes suddenly, it can cause a part of your body to jerk. This is called a spasm. Spasms happen most often in your arms, legs, hands, feet, and torso.

WEAKNESS

Spasticity can cause your muscles to feel very heavy or weak, making it hard to move.

Symptom triggers

Triggers of spasticity symptoms vary, but there are some common ones.

You may be more likely to have symptoms when you:

- » Are sick
- » Feel stressed²
- » Get too warm
- » Have a broken bone
- » Have an infection
- » Have sore skin
- » Need to urinate
- » Slouch
- » Wear clothes that are too tight

Talk with your doctor about your symptoms and how to manage them.

Find out if you have spasticity

If you think you may have spasticity, talk to your doctor.

The doctor will:⁴

- » **Check your reflexes**
- » **Test how well you move and perform daily tasks**
- » **Review your health history for problems with the brain, spine or muscles**

Once you've been diagnosed with spasticity, you and your doctor can discuss management options and goals.

Management goals

When you set your management goals, it's important to be realistic. Try to maintain or improve your quality of life by managing your symptoms.

For instance, your goals may be to:

- » **Perform daily tasks more easily**
- » **Feel less fatigued**
- » **Reduce cramps or spasms**
- » **Improve your balance**
- » **Increase your range of motion**
- » **Reduce your pain**
- » **Sit, stand or walk more comfortably**
- » **Improve speaking ability**

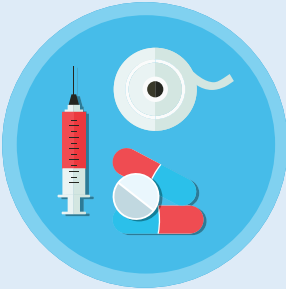
Management options

Currently, there is no cure for spasticity, but there are options that can help you manage your symptoms. Please review the most common management options below and consult your doctor to learn more.



REHABILITATION THERAPY

Physical, occupational or speech therapy may help your symptoms.³ You can receive rehabilitation therapy alone or along with other measures.



MEDICINE

You can take medicine to manage your symptoms.



SURGERY

You can get surgery to make your tendons, muscles and/or bones function better.³

Talk with your doctor about management options.



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1. <http://www.spasticityalliance.org/about-spasticity/stroke-and-spasticity/>, Last accessed: February 7, 2018
2. Bhimani, Rozina and Anderson, Lisa. "Clinical Understanding of Spasticity: Implications for Practice." Rehabilitation Research and Practice Volume 2014, Article ID 279175, 10 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2014/279175>
3. Cleveland Clinic. "Spasticity." <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/14346-spasticity> Last accessed: February 7, 2018
4. Shamsoddini, Alireza. "Management of Spasticity in Children with Cerebral Palsy." Tehran University of Medical Sciences. <http://ijp.tums.ac.ir>. Last accessed: February 7, 2018