



## **Mental Health America of Franklin County**

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# **Tardive Dyskinesia**

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## **What is tardive dyskinesia?**

Tardive dyskinesia is a neurological disorder caused by the long-term use of neuroleptic drugs, or anti-psychotic medications. Neuroleptic drugs are generally prescribed for psychiatric disorders, as well as for some gastrointestinal and neurological disorders. The prevalence of tardive dyskinesia is estimated to be 10 to 20 percent of individuals treated with anti-psychotic medications. The elderly are more susceptible to persistent and irreversible tardive dyskinesia than younger people.

Repetitive and involuntary movements characterize tardive dyskinesia. Features of the disorder may include grimacing, tongue protrusion, lip smacking, puckering and pursing, and rapid eye blinking. Rapid movements of the arms, legs, and trunk may also occur. Approximately 60 to 70 percent of the cases are mild, with about 3 percent being extremely severe. Severe cases may involve problems such as difficulty swallowing, speech interference, cosmetic disfiguration, and respiratory trouble.

## **How is it treated?**

There is no standard treatment for tardive dyskinesia. In many cases the medication will be adjusted to use the lowest possible dose, or discontinued if at all possible. Stopping the medication is a gradual process, lowering the doses 10 to 25 percent every one to three months. Replacing the neuroleptic drug with other medications may help some patients. Other drugs such as benzodiazepines, adrenergic antagonists, and dopamine agonists may also be beneficial. Symptoms of tardive dyskinesia may remain even after the medication is stopped. However, with careful management, some symptoms may improve or disappear with time.

## **Other Resources**

### **Tardive Dyskinesia/ Tardive Dystonia National Assn.**

P.O. Box 45732

Seattle, WA 98145-0732

Phone Number: (206) 522-3166

### **National Institute of Mental Health**

Phone Number: 301-443-4513

Toll Free Number: 1-866-615-6464

Fax Number: 301-443-4279  
Email Address: [nimhinfo@nih.gov](mailto:nimhinfo@nih.gov)  
Website URL: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

**National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)**

P.O. Box 8923  
New Fairfield, CT 06812-8923  
Phone Number: (203) 746-6518  
Toll-Free Number: (800) 999-6673  
Website URL: [www.rarediseases.org](http://www.rarediseases.org)

**Mental Health America of Franklin County** is a private, not-for-profit organization, established in 1956. We help people navigate the mental health system. We are dedicated to promoting mental health in Franklin County through advocacy, education, and support services. Our programs include: information and referral to community mental health and alcohol/drug services; free support groups for people with mental illness and their families; an Ombudsman program that assists clients in navigating the mental health and alcohol/drug system; mental health screenings in English and Spanish; Pro Bono Counseling Program where underinsured and uninsured individuals can receive free counseling; community and professional mental health education including Get Connected; and a quarterly newsletter featuring legislative updates and new happenings at MHAFC. We receive funding from the Franklin County ADAMH Board and United Way of Central Ohio. To become a member or find out more information, please visit us online at [www.mhafc.org](http://www.mhafc.org).