

Motor Neurone Disease

Health and Personal Care

In Motor Neurone Disease (MND) the nerves that support movement, speech, swallowing and breathing start to die which results in progressing muscle weakness, paralysis and wasting. In around 90% of cases there are no known causes, in the other 10% the cause is due to a faulty gene. MND is not contagious.



Up to 50% of people with MND experience some cognitive (thinking) and behaviour change. These changes are usually mild, but 5-15% may experience, or present with, a form of dementia.

Mouth care is really important when someone's swallow is abnormal.



May have slurred speech or not be able to talk but can understand what you say.

Take the time to find ways to communicate.



Problems with swallowing results in coughing, drooling and choking. Special care needs to be taken when feeding or giving medication.



Weakened respiratory muscles impact breathing and ability to cough. Breathing while lying flat can be very difficult for people with respiratory muscle weakness. Careful positioning can help with breathing. Some people use breathing machines overnight so they can sleep better. Seek medical advice before using oxygen.

People with MND may not be able to move but have full sensation so require frequent repositioning to feel comfortable and relieve pressure. Ask if they need pain medication.



When joints are not well supported due to weakened muscles, care needs to be taken when repositioning to avoid injuring the person.

May require a feeding tube for fluids and food.



Constipation is common due to;

- Immobility
- Modified diet and poor fluid intake
- Medications
- Inability to strain

Will continue to get weaker and more paralysed over time. Something they may have been able to do a month ago they may not be able to do today.



Make sure person has a way to call for assistance that they can use. Weak hands may not be able to use a buzzer.



MND Connect

MND Australia received funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services through an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grant to develop this resource.

To organise training for your organisation or to be sent more information about caring for someone with MND call the

MND Info Line on 1800 777 175

Monday to Friday 9am to 4:30pm

To learn more about MND visit **mndconnect.org.au**

Reference; MND Australia Aspects of Care