

How you can help

- Patients, families, professionals and others interested in myasthenia gravis can help by becoming volunteers in the efforts of their local areas. The national office will assist you in locating a chapter near you.
- You can organize an MG support group or chapter in your area should there be none nearby. The MGFA will assist you.
- You can distribute literature and educate your family, friends, and non-MG knowledgeable health care providers about the special needs of MG patients.
- You can participate in education and fundraising activities such as MG Walks and June Awareness.
- You can financially support the efforts of the Foundation with your tax-deductible donation. Encourage your employer, family, and friends to make matching contributions. Consider giving through your will or a variety of other planned giving options.

Tax-deductible

The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. A volunteer Board of Directors oversees its operation. The most recent report of the Independent Auditor and the Federal Form 990 are available from the national office upon request.

The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America, Inc. is a Community Health Charities Member Agency. Select MGFA by choosing the Community Health Charity Combined Fundraising Campaign number 11240.

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What is myasthenia gravis?

Myasthenia gravis (MG) is a chronic neuromuscular, autoimmune disorder that causes varying degrees of weakness involving the voluntary muscles of the body. Myasthenia gravis means “grave muscle weakness.” It can affect people of all races, both genders and at any age. The prevalence rate of patients with MG is estimated to be 20 per 100,000 population. MG may affect any voluntary muscle, but most commonly affects those that control eye movements, eyelids, chewing, swallowing, coughing and facial expression. Muscles that control breathing and movements of the arms and legs may also be affected. At present, the cause of MG is unknown, and there is no cure.

It all began with a little girl named Patricia



Jane Ellsworth,
1950's

When her daughter, Patricia, showed symptoms of myasthenia gravis, Jane Dewey Ellsworth was determined to find out everything she could about this strange disease. She found very little information and few to turn to for help. In 1952, determined to change this, she founded the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America, Inc. (MGFA).

Today, the Foundation touches the lives of hundreds of thousands of patients, families, friends, and medical professionals across the country and around the world. Through educational literature, public service announcements, support groups, conferences, and research support, the MGFA is striving for a world without MG.

Our Mission

The mission of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America, Inc. is to facilitate the timely diagnosis and optimal care of individuals affected by myasthenia gravis and closely related disorders and to improve their lives through programs of patient services, public information, medical research, professional education, advocacy and patient care.

How do we support our mission?

Patient Services

One of the primary activities of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America, Inc. is patient services, including provision of printed and on-line literature on the disorder and its treatment, newsletters, and support groups for patients and their families. Informational brochures, patient education materials, podcasts, DVDs and videos are available through the national office, local chapters and the Web site: www.myasthenia.org.

Professional Education

Professional education is carried out with the support of the national office through the Medical/Scientific Advisory Board (M/SAB) and the Nurses Advisory Board (NAB). Workshops, chapter-sponsored and annual scientific meetings and print material, including MGFA's Myasthenia Gravis – A Manual for the Health Care Provider, all support the ongoing education of medical and nursing professionals working in the field.

Medical Research

A focal point in MGFA's programs is funding medical research fellowships that explore the cause, care and treatment of myasthenia gravis. Short-term research fellowships are awarded to in-training healthcare professionals for gaining exposure to myasthenia gravis. Post-doctoral fellowships provide support for basic science and clinical research in myasthenia gravis.

Public Information

Annually, public service announcements and print ads are provided to media outlets across the country. June is Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month, providing a focal point to promote public education about myasthenia gravis.

Conferences

MGFA hosts three regularly-occurring, national-level conferences:

The MGFA National Conference combines the Foundation's annual business meeting with the opportunity for patients, their families and others to learn more about the disease and its treatments, current research, and tips for coping with the disease from experienced medical professionals and fellow patients.

The Scientific Session, held annually, provides medical professionals the opportunity to learn from colleagues about current, pre-published research in the field of myasthenia gravis. While the session primarily targets medical professionals, attendance is open to anyone.

The International Symposium, held in cooperation with the New York Academy of Sciences every five years, is a larger, international forum focusing on ready-to-publish medical research and helping to connect the global myasthenia gravis medical community.