

What is Dysautonomia?

Dysautonomia is an umbrella term used to describe several medical conditions causing a malfunction of the Autonomic Nervous System.

The Autonomic Nervous System controls the "automatic" functions of the body we do not consciously think about: heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, dilation and constriction of the pupils of the eye, kidney function, and temperature control. People living with various forms of dysautonomia have trouble regulating these systems. This can result in lightheadedness, fainting, unstable blood pressure, abnormal heart rates, malnutrition, and in severe cases, death.

Dysautonomia is not rare. More than 70 million people worldwide live with various forms of dysautonomia. People of any age, gender or race can be impacted. Despite the high prevalence of dysautonomia, most patients take years to get diagnosed due to a lack of awareness amongst the public and within the medical profession.

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) is just one form of dysautonomia and is estimated to impact a total of 1,000,000 to 3,000,000 Americans. POTS can cause lightheadness, fainting, tachycardia, chest pains, shortness of breath, GI upset, shaking, exercise intolerance, temperature sensitivity and more. While POTS predominantly impacts young women who appear healthy, researchers compare the disability seen in POTS to the disability seen in conditions like COPD and congestive heart failure.

—Source: *Dysautonomia International website*

Learn more about Dysautonomia:

www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/dysautonomia/dysautonomia.htm
www.dysautonomiainternational.org

