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Bells Palsy

Bells Palsy occurs when the nerves of the face become paralysed. It is difficult for the eye to shut properly as the muscles that keep the eye closed become weak. Bell's Palsy tends to inflict those convalescing from viral infections, diabetics and, generally, people between the ages of 30 and 50. This problem usually affects just one side of the face at a time. If you are afflicted with Bell's Palsy, it is highly unusual for you to have it twice.

What to look for...

It is usual for Bell's palsy to occur quickly with very little warning signals. However, some have noticed either a type of pain near the ear or an intolerance to certain sounds before the onset of the other paralysing symptoms. After a day or two, the paralysis usually crescendos. The good news is that the problem does not usually last forever. The majority of people will begin their recovery within two weeks. Within three months most sufferers are generally fully recovered.

It is very important to consult your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms as there could be other ailments that could be the problem.

- The muscles droop on one side of your face
- Closing the eyelid on the drooping side of your face is difficult
- You cannot blink
- Less sense of taste on the affected side
- You either become teary or are less teary than usual
- Numbness
- Drooling
- Difficulty chewing
- Muscles on the affected side may twitch
- Pain

Causes

Scientists believe the cause of Bell's Palsy can be linked to viral infections. Recently they have discovered evidence which indicates that the same virus that causes cold sores may be responsible for the majority of Bell's Palsy cases. Research is still being conducted and this is by no means a definite cause as yet.

Traditional Treatment

There are no treatments to stop Bell's Palsy totally. Yet it is vital that you visit your doctor in order for him/her to diagnose you correctly and rule out other possible causes. Your doctor may also attempt to reduce the inflammation of the nerve in the face which has been successful in shortening the course of Bell's palsy. If you experience decreased tearing, you may need to use eyedrops to prevent drying in the eye. Your doctor will recommend an appropriate brand. In severe cases surgery may be recommended. This is rare however.

Prevention

There are no known ways to prevent the development of Bell's palsy.

When to Seek Further Professional Advice

- You notice any of the symptoms listed above.