



ASK THE Medical Advisory Board

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My son recently broke his arm, and now it is in a cast. Since wearing the cast, he has developed a constant tic in his arm. Could the ticcing affect the healing of the broken bone?

Simply, the answer is 'yes.' Bone healing is complex and not completely understood. Several factors have bearing. Which bone or bones are fractured? How simple or complex is the fracture? Location? Nerve damage? Do his tic symptoms involve nerves and muscles attached to the fractured bone(s)? How adequate is your son's nutrition?

Upon initial X-ray, most orthopedists can give you an estimated time of healing based upon the bone fractured. If the fracture is simple and nutrition is adequate, despite the tics, it should be easily stabilized with a cast and heal "normally," unless the tics are in some way forcing the ends of the fracture to be pulled apart. About ten days after the accident, the groundwork for the bone repair is laid and the remaining healing process involves the body's removing the initial softer type of tissue and replacing it with the actual hard 'bone' cells. This process takes two months to about two years. Increased muscle activity in the area will increase the blood supply to that area and may even make this process more efficient. An interesting theory in orthopedics called Wolff's law states that the body puts bone where it is needed and reabsorbs it where it is not needed. In other words, the body knows where it is needed based on use. So by not using or moving a bony structure the body receives a cue and begins to reabsorb the bone. So really more movement is better.

My 13-year-old daughter used to have mild symptoms of TS, but now she tics uncontrollably. Could this be related to the onset of puberty and if so, are there any recommended interventions?

Tics are commonly thought to be increased by the hormonal changes associated with puberty, pregnancy and menopause. While hormones in general are known to have powerful influences on the ner-

vous system, just how they influence tics is not yet really understood. Puberty actually begins for most girls between the ages of 9 and 13. Although research in this area has yet to confirm a definitive influence, what we see clinically seems to indicate a correlation between hormonal changes associated with puberty and tic increases in girls. We seldom intervene medically to alter the course of puberty unless it is a life threatening circumstance. In conjunction with puberty, a 13-year-old girl is faced with many other developmental changes that can be stressful and this may increase tics. Be aware of other possible causes that may be influencing her tics such as a big test, no sleep, too much caffeine or poor eating habits. Also, children with tic disorders often have anxiety and/or ADHD that may complicate her tics. Based on the brief information offered with your question, your daughter could benefit from a very thorough evaluation by her physician to sort out the details. Any intervention in her situation should be carefully addressed based on her own individual case.

I heard somewhere that certain asthma medications and decongestants can exacerbate tics. Is this true?

To be on the safe side you should approach every over the counter drug on the market as having the potential for tic exacerbation. Asthma medications and decongestants are a broad and growing group of medications. Essentially any medication side effects list that includes restlessness, anxiety, insomnia, and agitation has a potential for increasing tics because they may stimulate the central nervous system. For example, Sudafed is known to contain a stimulant and might potentially increase tics. You might try using the lowest effective dose and only when needed. Corticosteroids such as Advair have few central nervous system side effects listed and you might consider using Advair as part of your asthma regimen with little or no impact on tics. Used as a 'rescue inhaler,' Albuterol has long been used, in the treatment of asthma and is known to have CNS side effects. During an asthma exacerbation, breathing is obviously more important than tic control. Singulair does not cross the blood brain barrier so that CNS stimulation would not be an expected side effect, but in a crisis Singulair may not be the appropriate medication choice. Just as every case of asthma is treated on an individualized basis, the potential for tic exacerbation should be considered by weighing individual risks versus benefits. Of course, these are general clues to predicting tic exacerbation, but there is little definitive (research based) information available on this topic.

In my experience, the newer decongestants, allergy and asthma medications have had minimal impact on symptoms. As you observe symptom increases, list those medications and doses that you suspect are the cause. Most importantly, discuss with your physician and your pharmacist the potential for drug interactions and side effects of medications that you take whether prescribed or over the counter including herbs, nutritional and vitamins. There are large computerized data banks of information available to your pharmacist and he/she can cross-reference the side effects of combinations of medications quickly.

JOIN THE LEGACY SOCIETY

Remembering TSA when you plan your estate can help assure the future of the Association. It's as easy as adding a line to your will or naming TSA in your insurance policy. The Legacy Society is made up of a dedicated group of TSA members who want to make sure that TSA has the tools to continue its mission of helping all people with TS cope with their disorder, while moving towards finding its cause and a cure.

In addition to bequests and gifts of insurance, it's also possible to establish a charitable annuity or trust in TSA's name, that could present significant tax advantages to you, while preserving a maximum remainder of your estate for your heirs. For further information, call Mark Levine, ext. 230 in the TSA Development Office. All calls concerning estate planning and the Legacy Society are confidential.

