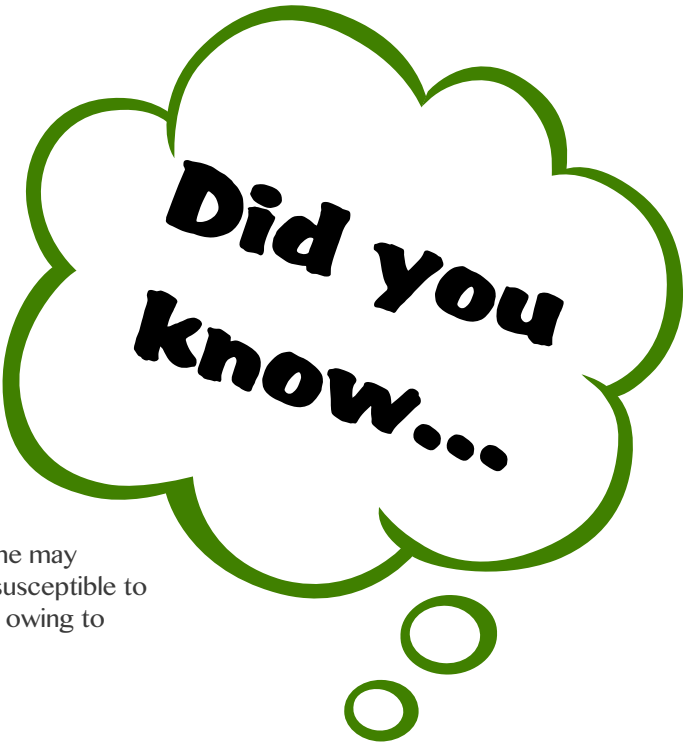
What is Neurofibromatosis?

Neurofibromatosis causes tumors to grow on nerve tissue. Neurofibromatosis, also called Recklinghausen's disease, is a genetic disorder that disturbs cell growth in the nervous system, which leads to tumours developing anywhere from the brain to the spinal cord or nerves. Tumours are usually benign, meaning noncancerous. Neurofibromatosis normally only causes mild symptoms such as light-brown spots on the skin, freckling in the armpit or groin area, and small bumps on the iris, but symptoms can be much more severe.

This disorder is autosomal dominant. This means that the genes that are affected only need one copy to develop. In a family where one parent has neurofibromatosis, this gives their children a 50 percent chance of developing the disorder.

Depending on the individual, neurofibromatosis severity varies greatly. Some may not experience any symptoms due to the disorder, while others are more susceptible to symptoms. Roughly half of all cases are limited to one member per family, owing to mutations.



Forms of Neurofibromatosis

There are three different types of neurofibromatosis: Type 1, Type 2, and schwannomatosis.

Type 1: This form of neurofibromatosis leads to the nerve tissue growing tumours that are often benign, but can cause damages with a person's other tissues and lead to nerve compression.

Type 2: Tumours grow inside of the cranial nerve and the vestibulocochlear nerve. This typically leads to hearing loss.

Schwannomatosis: Schwannomas, which are tumours of the cranial nerve, will also develop on the peripheral and spinal nerve.

Symptoms

Its onset can normally be detected during the childhood years or early adulthood. The tumours often start out as benign, but can become malignant.

Effects

The effects of neurofibromatosis are numerous. A person may experience loss of hearing, learning disability, and cardiovascular complications with their heart and blood vessels. The pain can become so severe that the person is permanently disabled. Nerve compression caused by neurofibromatosis can cause crippling pain and permanent loss of vision.

Treatment

There are treatments available for the disorder, which are aimed towards stimulating healthy growth and putting a stop to issues before they have a chance to become more serious. If larger tumours begin to grow and press down on vital organs, the person may need surgery in order to experience true relief. Other courses of treatment include physical therapy, medications to dull the pain and radio-surgery

May is Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month
Wednesday May 17, 2017 is World Neurofibromatosis Awareness Day
Our goal is to put NF in the national limelight, to foster hope in the NF community, and to create wonderful fundraising opportunities that will help us continue our work!
To find out more and how you can help visit Neurofibromatosis