

What is Long QT Syndrome?

Your heart is the muscle that pumps blood through your body. The beating of the heart is controlled by electrical signals. These signals need to be regular for the heart to function properly. When a person has Long QT, these signals could become irregular. This causes the heart to beat faster, work harder, and become tired. As it can be a serious health problem, Long QT must be treated.



What might happen to me?

As a person with Long QT you must be very aware of your body and go to your doctor if these things happen to you:

- Fainting
- Sweating
- Dizziness
- Racing Heart
- Seizures
- Finding it hard to breathe

How to care for myself:

The following will place extra strain on your heart:

- Hard physical activity
- Powerful emotions
- Stressful situations
- Being surprised (for example, scary movies and loud noises)
- Very cold or very hot temperatures
- Activity is important and should be discussed with your doctor

Let people know you have it!

Since Long QT is not common, most people, including many doctors, don't know about it. It is important for you to let all medical people that see you know you have it. People you should tell include all **doctors, nurses, dentists** and **pharmacists** that treat you. Remember if you move to tell your new doctor! You should also get a medic alert bracelet and an ID card for your wallet. Other people that should know include your place of work or school.



What medicines can't I take?

Because you have Long QT there are many medications that can affect you and should be avoided. These include many that can be bought at lots of stores. Common medicines to avoid include Decongestants such as Sinutab, Tylenol Cold and Tylenol Sinus.

While all illegal drugs are harmful, cocaine is especially dangerous if you have Long QT. Don't use it!

It is important for you to talk with a doctor or pharmacist before taking any medications!

Does my family have it?

Long QT can be passed from parents to their children. If you have been diagnosed with Long QT, every member of your family should be tested. Even if family members do not have symptoms, they should be tested. They may still have the condition and are at risk for heart problems. Early diagnosis and treatment may prevent serious complications such as heart failure.

What can I do to help myself?

Be sure to take all medications given to you by your doctor as directed; (it is likely that you will be on medications for the rest of your life).

Eat healthy, a good diet is important for the health of your heart.

Avoid smoking, and caffeine drinks such as pop and coffee.

Report all symptoms as soon as possible to your doctor.

What does treatment look like?

Some people with Long QT do not have symptoms. It is still very important to follow the recommended treatment because serious heart problems can occur even if you were feeling great the day before. You need to follow all instructions given to you by your doctor.

Heart medication is the most common treatment. In serious cases, you may need an operation to put a small machine such as a pacemaker into your chest to make your heart beat normally.

Need someone to talk to?

Learning that you or a family member has Long QT can be very upsetting. It's important to remember that you can still live a full life with Long QT. Family and friends may be able to give you support and there is also a local Long QT support group at Gitxsan Health. Other people who can also give you support include:

**Community Counseling Service
at 842-5144**

**Hazelton Secondary School counselors
at 842-5214**

**Gitxsan Health Society
at 842-5165**



If you have questions or want more information, you can call:

Gitxsan Health Society
PO Box 223
Hazelton, BC
VOJ 1Y0
Phone: 250-842-5165

Wrinch Memorial Hospital
Bag 999
Hazelton, BC
VOJ 1Y0
Phone: 250-842-5234



Long QT Syndrome



Loon representing family unit

Virginia Morgan of

What it means to you & your family

