Neurasthenia, Da Costa's Syndrome, Asthenia

Neurasthenia is a collection of complaints. These may include weakness or fatigue and sometimes chest pain.

CAUSES

Stress and anxiety are thought to cause this. It occurs equally in:

- Children.
- Adults.
- Males.
- Females.

It may occur along with or after:

- Depression.
- Other psychological disorders.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms with no obvious cause may include:

- Weakness.
- Fatigue.
- Chest pain.
- Rapid heartbeat (*tachycardia*).
- Extra heartbeats (*palpitations*).
- Anxiety.
- Over-breathing (*hyperventilation*).
- Clammy hands and feet.
- Dizziness.
- Periodic sighing.
- Sweating.
- You may actually feel pain even though no physical cause may be found.

DIAGNOSIS

This is a diagnosis your caregiver makes after he has tested you and has talked to you to make sure there is not a physical cause for your problems. Once you know that the cause is not something you need to worry about, it becomes easier to ignore the feelings and get better.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF NEURASTHENIA

- **Angiopathic Neurasthenia** (also called Angioparalytic Neurasthenia, or Pulsating Neurasthenia) refers to a mild form of Neurasthenia. With it, the patient feels a pulsing or throbbing sensation throughout the entire body.
- **Neurasthenia Precox** (or Primary Neurasthenia) tends to occur most often in adolescents. It is characterized by nervous exhaustion.
- **Gastric Neurasthenia** is a mild form of Neurasthenia along with digestive dysfunction, stomach enlargement (distention), and indigestion.
- **Neurasthenia Gravis** refers to an extreme and persistent form of Neurasthenia.

TREATMENT

Testing is done to make sure there are not physical causes that should be treated. Once you are reassured that this is not a condition that will cause you harm, other than the present anxiety you are feeling, you can begin your recovery. Counseling can help you learn how to control stress and anxiety. Your caregiver may give you medications if it continues. Biofeedback and mental imagery are other relaxation techniques that may be used.

This is a condition where it is often difficult for you to believe there is not some physical thing wrong that is causing this. It is OK to think this. Once you are satisfied there is nothing wrong, try not to bounce from caregiver to caregiver hoping to find someone who will find something wrong. Keep working with someone with whom you feel comfortable. This problem will eventually go away.

Document Released: 11/15/2005 Document Re-Released: 11/30/2009
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