



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Autonomic Dysreflexia: What it is and what to do about it.

Autonomic Dysreflexia (au-to-nom-ic dis-re-flex-i-a), also known as **AD**, is a very important thing to know about if you or someone you care for has had an injury to the neck or back at or above the T6 level.

As a result of spinal cord injury, the body's normal system of sending and receiving messages is interrupted. When something is irritating the person, the message cannot get through in the usual way, so the body can respond with different symptoms. **AD** can cause strokes and even death if not treated quickly.

There are many things that can cause **AD**. Some of these things are:

- A full bladder
- A full bowel
- Infection
- Sores
- Pain
- Sunburns
- Clothing that is too tight
- Shoes that are too tight
- Sex

If you or your family member has one of these problems, it could be **AD**:

- Pounding headache
- Sweating on face, arms, chest
- Blurry vision
- Goosebumps
- Slow heart beat
- Sudden stuffy nose
- Very high blood pressure



If you think you or your family member is having **AD** you should:

- Put your head up
- Check your bladder. If you have a catheter, be sure it is working
- Take off any tight clothes or shoes
- Be sure your bowels are empty
- Check your skin for sores

If these things do not help, **Call 911!**



Some doctors and nurses don't know what **AD** is. It is important that you know the signs and can tell the doctors that you think you have **AD**.

**Speak up at any time if you
have any questions or concerns**