

# Moebius Syndrome

BIRTH DEFECT RESEARCH FOR CHILDREN



## What is Moebius Syndrome?

Moebius Syndrome is a congenital paralysis of the sixth and seventh cranial nerves. These nerves control lateral eye movement, blinking and the muscles that allow the face to show expression. Frequently, this condition also involves dysfunction of other cranial nerves. Symptoms can include crossed-eyes (esotropia); lack of facial expression; deformities of the mouth, face, tongue, and jaw; feeding and swallowing problems; limb abnormalities; defects of the musculoskeletal system, and mental retardation.



# Moebius Syndrome



How many children have Moebius Syndrome?

Moebius Syndrome is a very rare condition affecting boys and girls equally. There have been over 100 documented cases of this syndrome.

How do you know if your child has Moebius Syndrome?

Currently, there are no reliable prenatal tests for Moebius Syndrome. Associated features like limb defects may be diagnosed through obstetrical ultrasound scans. The first signs of this syndrome in newborn infants can be impaired ability to suck, excessive drooling, crossed eyes, and other symptoms mentioned above.

What causes Moebius Syndrome?

Most cases of Moebius Syndrome occur randomly without any apparent cause. In some cases chromosomal abnormalities have been detected. The medical literature offers conflicting theories on the cause of the syndrome. Genetic counseling is available for affected families. Other anomalies have been associated with Moebius Syndrome including Poland's Syndrome, Pierre Robin Syndrome, and other cranial nerve palsies.

How can you help a child with Moebius Syndrome?

There is no treatment for the underlying disorder. However, several things can be done to help children with Moebius Syndrome. Special tubes are available to help with feeding. Tubes can also be inserted in a child's ears to reduce fluid and improve hearing. Surgery may be performed to correct crossed-eyes, repair cleft palates, and improve limb and facial deformities. Physical and speech therapy can improve motor skills and speech. Depending on your child's needs, his medical team may need to include a pediatrician, a neurologist, an ENT (Ear Nose and Throat) specialist, an ophthalmologist, a physical therapist, and a speech therapist.

What's in the future for a child with Moebius Syndrome?

Children with Moebius Syndrome may have speech problems and hearing loss and some may also experience learning difficulties. Mild retardation has been reported in 10-15% of the cases of Moebius Syndrome. Your child's quality of life will depend on the severity of his/her symptoms.

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