

Fast Facts

Bell's Palsy

- Sudden weakness in the facial muscles that cause half of the face to appear to droop making smile look one-sided and eye on the affected side resistant to closing
 - Exact cause is unknown
 - Also called acute peripheral facial palsy of unknown cause
- Typically occurs after a viral infection, so it's thought that the viruses cause inflammation to the nerve that controls facial muscles
 - This nerve goes through a narrow space of bone on its way to the face, when it's swollen, it puts pressure on it
- In addition to the facial muscles, this nerve affects tears, saliva, taste and the small bone in the middle of the ear
 - Can occur at any age

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rapid onset of mild weakness to full paralysis of one side of the face (this usually occurs within a few hours to a few days) -Facial drooping -Difficulty making expressions (ex. smiling or closing the affected eye) -Drooling -Pain around the jaw -Pain in/behind the ear on the affected side -Headache -Loss of taste -Increased sensitivity to sound in affected ear -Changes to the amount of saliva/tears your body produces 	<p><i>Medications:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Corticosteroids -Antivirals <p><i>Physical Therapy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Face Massage Techniques <p><i>Lifestyle:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep affected eye moist (eyedrops and ointment) -Protect affected eye (glasses and eye patch) -Take over-the-counter pain relievers as needed 	<p><i>Do What You Need to Prevent Infections:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wash hand frequently and thoroughly -Stay up-to-date on vaccinations -Practice safe sex -Avoid being around those who are sick -Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze

Note: Bell's palsy symptoms are very similar to signs of a stroke. It's vital to be seen by a doctor immediately upon noticing them this way a doctor can rule out if you're having a stroke. This is crucial since if a stroke is left untreated it can have serious consequences.

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