



The following excerpt has been taken from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource Center website.

http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.mtKZKgMWKwG/b.4453225/k.7548/GuillainBarré_Syndrome.htm

Guillain-Barré Syndrome

Guillain-Barré (ghee-yan bah-ray) syndrome is a disorder in which the body's immune system attacks part of the peripheral nervous system. The first symptoms of this disorder include varying degrees of weakness or tingling sensations in the legs. The weakness and abnormal sensations often spread to the arms and upper body.

These symptoms can increase in intensity until the muscles cannot be used at all and the patient is almost totally paralyzed -- considered a medical emergency. The patient is often put on a respirator to assist with breathing.

Most people, however, recover from even the most severe cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome, although some continue to have some degree of weakness.

Guillain-Barré syndrome is rare. It usually occurs a few days or weeks after the patient has had symptoms of a respiratory or gastrointestinal viral infection. Occasionally, surgery or vaccinations will trigger the syndrome. The disorder can develop over the course of hours or days, or it may take up to 3 to 4 weeks.

It is not known why Guillain-Barré strikes some people and not others, or what sets the disease in motion. What scientists do know is that the body's immune system begins to attack the body itself, causing what is known as an autoimmune disease.

There is no known cure for Guillain-Barré syndrome, but therapies can lessen the severity of the illness and accelerate the recovery in most patients. There are also a number of ways to treat the complications of the disease. Currently, plasmapheresis and high-dose immunoglobulin therapy are used.

Scientists are looking at the workings of the immune system to find which cells are responsible for carrying out the attack on the nervous system.

Source: The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Web Sites

<http://gbs-cidp.org/>

GBS/CIDP Foundation International

104 ½ Forrest Avenue

Narberth, PA 19072

Phone: 610-667-0131, 866-224-3301 (Toll-free)

GBS/CIDP Foundation International offers information and interactive bulletin boards, research funding and a worldwide chapter organization to patients, caregivers and families affected by Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) and Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP).

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/gbs/gbs.htm>

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: Guillain-Barré Syndrome Information Page

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/guillainbarresyndrome.html>

MedlinePlus: Guillain-Barré Syndrome

<http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1180594-overview>

eMedicine: Pediatric Guillain-Barré Syndrome

Newsletters

The Communicator. Guillain-Barré Syndrome Foundation International. Narberth, PA.

<http://www.gbs-cidp.org/>

The following books are available for free loan from the PRC library. For more information, please see www.paralysis.org and click *Borrow from Our Lending Library* under PRC Quick Links.

Books—Non-Fiction

- Ayrton, Robert J. **Reflections in the Mirror: An Autobiography.** Haverford, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2002.
Ayrton was a serviceman whose paralysis made an iron lung necessary for a short time.
- Ayyildiz, Judy Light. **Nothing But Time: A Woman's Struggle with Guillain-Barré Syndrome.** Xlibris, 2000.
Ayyildiz wrote the book from a journal she kept while recovering from GBS in 1985.

- Baier, Sue and Mary Zimmeth Schomaker. **Bed Number Ten**. New York: CRC Press, 1995.
Baier was a Houston housewife and mother of two when GBS left her completely paralyzed for four and a half months.
- Barber, Guylaine. **Guillain-Barré Syndrome: Through the Eyes of a Mother**. Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2009.
Barber's 17 year old daughter struggled with GBS.
- Brandt, Ann K. **Learning To Walk Again: How Guillain Barré Taught Me to Walk a Different Path**. New York: Writer's Showcase, 2002.
After becoming a GBS patient, Brandt decided to leave her community college teaching position and started writing and liaison work with other GBS patients. This book recounts her personal experience with GBS.
- Comp, Byron. **Guillain-Barré Syndrome: My Worst Nightmare**. Byron Comp, 2004.
- **Guillain-Barre Syndrome and Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy: An Overview for the Layperson**. Wynnewood, PA: GBS Foundation International, 2000. 9th edition.
- Heller, Joseph and Speed Vogel. **No Laughing Matter**. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1986.
This is novelist Heller's account of his encounter with GBS. He remained in the hospital for 6 months and left it in a wheelchair. Heller is the author of Catch-22.
- Iannello, Silvia. **Guillain-Barre Syndrome: Pathological, Clinical and Therapeutical Aspects**. New York: Nova Biomedical Books, 2005.
- **Immune System Disorders Sourcebook: Basic Information About Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Guillain-Barré Syndrome, etc.** (Allan R. Cook, editor) Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1997.
Lists resources for these diseases.
- Kliewer, Evelyn. **Please, God, Help Me Get Well in Your Spare Time**. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1979.
Kliewer recounts her son Bruce's Guillain-Barré which started when he was seven.
- Langton, Brian S. **A First Step: Understanding Guillain-Barré Syndrome**. Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford, 1992.
Langton kept a day-to-day journal of his experience with GBS. His doctors and loved ones also entered their thoughts on his progress.

- Langton, Brian S. **Guillain-Barré Syndrome: 5 Years Later Stepping Closer to Recovery.** Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford, 2006.
- **Official Patient's Sourcebook on Guillain-Barré Syndrome: A Revised and Updated Directory for the Internet Age.** James N. Parker and Philip M. Parker, editors. San Diego, CA: Icon Health Publications, 2002.
Lists resources for GBS, especially websites on the disease.
- Parry, Gareth J. and Joel S. Steinberg. **Guillain-Barré Syndrome: From Diagnosis to Recovery.** New York: Demos, 2007. An American Academy of Neurology Press Quality of Life Guide. For the consumer and family.
- Roth, Regina R. **The Darkness Is Not Dark: Overcoming Guillain-Barré Syndrome.** Xulon Press, 2005.
- Safranski, Debby Burnett. **Don't Dump Daddy in the Flower Bed!!** Kennesaw, GA: Alling-Porterfield Publishing House, 2004.
Safranski recounts her husband's victory over GBS.
- Savella, Italo Giovanni. **Up From the Abyss: A Journey of Personal Redemption From the Ravages of Guillain-Barré Syndrome.** New York: iUniverse, 2005.
- Skinner, Kenneth L. **With Wings as Eagles.** Bossier City, LA: Everett Companies, 1993.
- Taylor, Phillip. **Going Full Circle: My Fight Against Guillain Barre Syndrome.** Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford, 2007.
- Tucker, William Thomas. **Miracles Made Possible: An Autobiographical Discovery of God.** Charlottesville, VA.: Hampton Roads, 2004.
Tucker's daughter contracted GBS and later became a professional violinist.
- Wilcox, Dorris R. **No Time for Tears: Transforming Tragedy into Triumph.** Mt. Pleasant, SC: Sea Oats Press, 2000.
Wilcox was a successful interior designer when she was stricken with GBS and paralyzed from the neck down. Within 18 months, she achieved 95% recovery and returned to work. The book has a list of resources for those experiencing GBS.
- Wilson, Yvonne M. **Sifted Gold.** St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974.

Books—Fiction

- Antman, Michael. **Cherry Whip.** ENC Press, 2004.

- Getsi, Lucia Cordell. **Intensive Care**. Minneapolis, MN: New Rivers Press, 1992.
A collection of poems written about her daughter's bout with GBS.
- Hatrick, Gloria. **Masks**. New York: Orchard Books, 1996.
This is for children. Desperate to help his older brother Will who has GBS, Pete uses tribal masks to communicate with him.
- Riley, Jane. **Solomon's Porch: The Story of Ben and Rose**. Baltimore, MD: AmErica House, 1999.

The information contained in this message is presented for the purpose of educating and informing you about paralysis and its effects. Nothing contained in this message should be construed nor is intended to be used for medical diagnosis or treatment. It should not be used in place of the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider. Should you have any health care related questions, please call or see your physician or other qualified health care provider promptly. Always consult with your physician or other qualified health care provider before embarking on a new treatment, diet or fitness program. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this message.