



Functional Neurological Disorder (FND)

A Simple Starting Guide for Patients and Caregivers

Receiving a diagnosis of Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) can feel confusing or overwhelming. Clear, calm information can help people begin to understand the condition.

You are not alone. Many people living with Functional Neurological Disorder find that understanding the condition and accessing supportive resources can make a meaningful difference over time.

Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) is a condition involving changes in how the nervous system functions. It can affect movement, sensation, awareness, speech, cognition, and other neurological functions. FND can occur on its own or alongside other neurological or medical conditions.

FND symptoms are real, can cause significant disability, and are not intentionally produced. FND is recognized within modern neurology and is the subject of ongoing clinical research.

Common Symptoms of FND

- Tremor or changes in movement
- Weakness or difficulty walking
- Changes in sensation such as numbness or tingling
- Speech or voice changes

- Balance or dizziness difficulties
- Seizure-like episodes (often called functional seizures)
- Cognitive difficulties, and commonly associated symptoms such as fatigue

Symptoms can vary widely from person to person and may fluctuate over time.

FND symptoms are real and involuntary. They are not imagined and are not intentionally produced by the individual.

An Important Thing to Know

Understanding FND is often an important first step in navigating the condition.

Research continues to investigate the mechanisms involved in FND. Studies have identified differences in the functioning and connectivity of brain networks involved in processes such as movement, attention, emotion, sense of agency, and sensory processing.

Some people experience meaningful improvement with appropriate explanation, treatment, rehabilitation, and support, although outcomes vary. Treatment should be individualized according to a person's symptoms, needs, and any coexisting conditions.

Helpful Early Steps

- Learning about FND from reliable medical and educational sources
- Working with healthcare professionals who understand the condition
- Finding a sustainable balance between activity and rest when fatigue or activity tolerance is a concern
- Exploring coping or grounding strategies that feel helpful and appropriate
- Building supportive routines and environments with family or caregivers

Learning More and Finding Support

Healing Horizons for Functional Neurological Disorder (HHFFND) is a Canadian nonprofit organization that provides educational resources and supportive tools for individuals and families affected by FND.

Resources available include:

- Educational information about FND
- Practical coping and grounding tools
- Resources for families and caregivers
- Information about peer support initiatives

Website: healinghorizonsfnd.ca

Important Note: Healing Horizons for Functional Neurological Disorder provides educational resources and peer-support information. We do not provide medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Individuals should consult their healthcare providers regarding medical care.

References

1. Aybek S, Perez DL. Diagnosis and management of functional neurological disorder. *BMJ*. 2022;376:o64. doi:10.1136/bmj.o64.
2. Stone J, Burton C, Carson A. Recognising and explaining functional neurological disorder. *BMJ*. 2020;371:m3745. doi:10.1136/bmj.m3745.