



# Essential Tremor Facts

**Essential tremor is a neurological condition that causes a rhythmic trembling of the hands, head, voice, legs or trunk.**

- An estimated 10 million Americans have ET and millions more worldwide.
- While trembling of the hands, head, voice, legs or trunk are common in ET, some people have a feeling of internal tremor.
- The cause of ET is currently unknown. It is thought to be related to abnormal functioning of the part of the brain called the cerebellum or a chemical in the brain called GABA.
- Although there are many possible causes of tremor, ET is the most common. Still, misdiagnosis of tremor is a problem. According to the *Canadian Journal of Neuroscience*, general neurologists treating tremor have a diagnostic error rate of 25% to 35%.
- ET is often misdiagnosed as Parkinson's disease, yet according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, eight times as many people have ET as have Parkinson's.
- ET is not confined to the elderly. Children and middle-aged people can also develop ET. In fact, newborns have been diagnosed with the condition.
- There is evidence that ET is genetic. Each child of a parent who has ET has a 50% chance of inheriting a gene that causes the condition. However, sometimes people with no family history of tremor develop ET.
- Few effective prescription medications are available for treating ET. Unfortunately, it is estimated that less than 60% of people with ET are helped by these medications.
- Researchers estimate that 4% to 5% of people age(s) 40 to 60 have ET. The incidence rate for people age 60 and older is estimated at 6.3% to 9%.
- People who have ET become disabled at worst and feel frustrated or embarrassed at best.
- Quality of life is a big issue for people with ET. Daily activities such as eating, drinking, grooming and writing become difficult, if not impossible.
- Many people with ET are too embarrassed to go out in public and remain isolated in their homes, which can lead to depression.



The mission of the International Essential Tremor Foundation (IETF) is to provide hope to the essential tremor (ET) community worldwide through awareness, education, support and research.