

Everybody's different



nobody's perfect

**Muscular  
Dystrophy**  
Campaign

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**Everybody's different, nobody's perfect.** Look around you'll see that people can be small or tall, thin or big. Perhaps some of your friends and relatives don't see too well and wear glasses to help them.

Maybe some of your friends break out in a rash when they eat certain foods (this is called an allergy). And I bet you've noticed that some people use a wheelchair or scooter to get around.

*You see everybody's different  
nobody's perfect*



# Let's talk about you

How are you different from the person next to you?

Well, some children can't run as fast as others can. They get where they're going, but it takes them longer to get there. Their legs are not so strong and they also have a harder time jumping, running, climbing stairs or just keeping up when they are playing with their friends.

This is because they have a muscle weakness and it's caused by a number of conditions – some are called muscular dystrophy. That's what you have and that's why you're different.



# What do we know about muscular dystrophy?

We know that muscular dystrophy affects children. We know that it makes their muscles weak. We know that it is not their fault that they have it and we know that scientists are working for a cure. We also know that muscular dystrophy doesn't change your other abilities. You can still see, hear, smell, taste and talk, just like all your friends. In fact, some of the cleverest children have muscular dystrophy.

So you see, even though you may not run as fast as others, there are lots of things you can do just as well as everyone else can.



What things?

# What things?

Well, thinking things and things you can do with your hands instead of your legs. Things like reading, drawing or games that you can play sitting down.

Hobbies, like collecting or building things (such as models), or using a computer or playing video games with your friends. Doing well at school does not depend on having strong legs. You can also be a good friend and fun to be around.



What can you be the best at?



By now you can see that everybody is different and nobody's perfect, because we are all good at some things and not so good at others.

**That goes for everybody, and for you too!**





You may not believe that children with muscular dystrophy can be involved in sports. Well, I know of at least one who is. Players aren't the only ones who are active in sports. There are also team managers and coaches. The boy I'm talking about is a coach/manager for a football team. He goes to all the games and is a big part of the team so they really can't do without him. I know a girl with muscular dystrophy who runs a newspaper at her school. And a boy who works as a dj spinning and mixing different sounds. All three use a wheelchair!

So what if it gets hard for

What about that?

Well, keep your legs well stretched (sometimes a physiotherapist or your parents will have to help you stretch them) and keep on walking as long as you can. This will keep you on your feet longer than just saying 'oh, what's the use, it's too much trouble', and giving up.

Don't forget, you are a special person and should feel proud of what you can do, especially if you have to work hard to do it.





# you to walk?

Even after it gets really hard to keep walking, there are other ways to help you take those important steps such as using splints (sometimes called orthoses).

Splints are like extra muscles, except you wear them outside your legs. They are made especially to fit and are light, comfortable and easy to put on and take off. They don't even show when you wear them under a pair of trousers.

When you use splints, your own muscles don't have to work as hard, and they don't get tired so quickly. With splints, you can stand, walk and do lots of things.



There are other ways of being helped when you have muscular dystrophy. Doctors can help keep you as healthy as possible, even when your muscles are weak. Physiotherapists can help you do your exercises to keep your muscles stretched out.



Occupational therapists (sometimes called OT for short) can teach you new ways to do everyday things like getting dressed, eating, playing and doing your homework. And social workers can help you and your family understand that everybody's different, nobody's perfect, and handle the kind of differences that having muscular dystrophy means.



It's no fun being so different that you can't run off and play the way you want to. But playing isn't all running and there are lots of things you can do well. You can help yourself by understanding that it is normal to be afraid and have angry feelings about being different. Everybody's different and everybody feels that way sometimes.

It sometimes helps to talk about these feelings with someone close to you. It's always easier to get rid of a bad feeling by sharing it with someone, like your mum or dad, or a good friend.

But how can you  
help yourself?

And you can help yourself by realising that you're not alone because there are lots of people working with you. There are a lot of people who are interested in you and who love you because, just like them, you are different.



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