



Tips for Diagnosing Myotonic Dystrophy

Patients may present with:

**Being “tired
all the time”**

**Early onset
cataracts**

**Unexplained
arrhythmia (eg.
heart block/LBBB)**

Carry out your usual investigations, paying particular attention to other aspects of the Past Medical History, such as:

**Facial
weakness**

**Myotonia
(eg. Difficulty
releasing
grip)**

**Frontal
Balding**

**Previous
anaesthetic
difficulties**

If investigations are normal, and there are still concerns, ask more generally about the Family History (FH), paying particular attention to:

**FH
Sudden
death**

**FH
anaesthetic
difficulties**

**FH
muscle
weakness**

**FH
Myotonic
Dystrophy**

**FH
Early onset
cataracts**

**FH
child with neuro-
muscular symptoms**

If continuing concern, examine for Myotonia (eg. Grip myotonia - ask patient to squeeze fingers tightly for **10 seconds**, then release)

If a diagnosis of Myotonic Dystrophy seems possible, please refer to your local regional genetics centre for Advice.

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and

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written by **General Practitioners for General Practitioners**

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If you have a patient with myotonic dystrophy, please pass on our details as we would like to hear from them and offer the hand of support and friendship.

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