Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Here are some facts on Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy:

- It is one of the nine types of muscular dystrophies
- Duchenne muscular dystrophy was first described by French neurologist, Guillaune Benjamin Amand Duchenne in the 1860's.
- It is an inherited disorder
- It is caused by an absence of dystrophin, a protein that bonds the muscle cell
- It is characterized by progressive muscle degeneration
- It occurs in about 1 out of every 3,600 male infants
- Risks include a family history of Duchenne muscular dystrophy
- Symptoms start appearing between the ages of 3-5.
- By the age of 12, most males affected may lose their ability to walk
- Breathing difficulties and heart disease usually start by the age of 20
- Very rare are females affected by the disease.
- Early symptoms include muscle weakness in the hips, pelvic area, thighs and shoulders.
- By teen years, the heart and respiratory muscles are affected.
- Duchenne muscular dystrophy carriers are females with one normal dystrophin gene on one x chromosome and an abnormal dystrophin gene on the other x chromosome
- Most carriers do not show any signs or symptoms.

- Affected children may have delayed motor skills including sitting, standing and walking.
- Survival into the early 30’s is becoming more common due to advances in cardia and respiratory care.
- Duchenne is associated with a heart disease that weakens the cardiac muscle
- Between 400 and 600 boys in the United States are born with these conditions each year.
- there are a few cases which results from new mutations in affected males
- steroid drugs can slow the loss of muscular strength
- There is no known cure for Duchenne muscular dystrophy