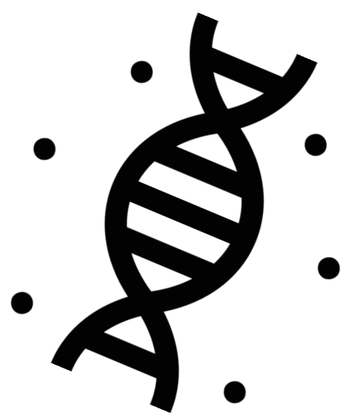
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)

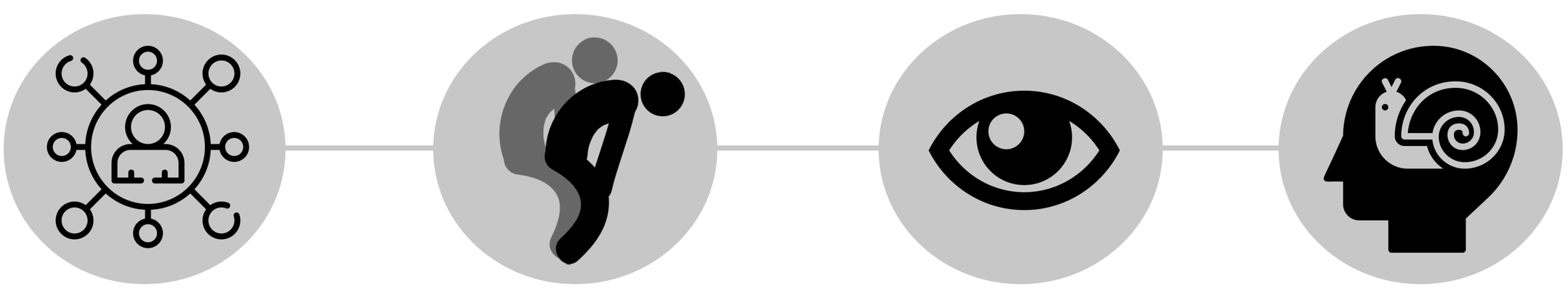
Fact Sheet

Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease (CJD) is a rare and fatal brain disorder. There are different kinds of CJD including Sporadic, Familial, Acquired, and Variant.



CJD is caused by a type of protein called a prion. About 85% of cases are Sporadic CJD and it is unknown how it is spread. Variant CJD is likely to be caused by eating meat from a cow with a certain prion disease. A smaller number of cases are born with mutations of the gene, called familial CJD. It is not known to spread through casual contact.

Signs and Symptoms



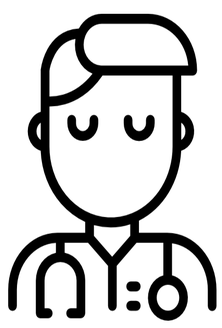
Noticeable social and behavioral changes

Loss of balance

Vision problems and blindness

Slowing of brain function

Symptoms vary based on the type of CJD. In sporadic and familial CJD, symptoms mainly affect the brain. In variant CJD, symptoms affect a person's behavior and emotions followed by neurological symptoms a few months later. Symptoms are unpredictable in iatrogenic CJD.

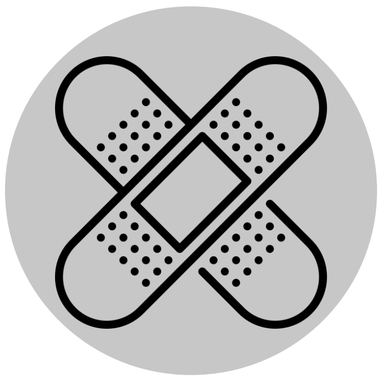


CJD is diagnosed based on signs and symptoms and progression of the disease. Testing of brain tissue confirms the disease. There is no known treatment for CJD.

Prevention

Caregivers, healthcare workers, and others should take these measures when working with a person with CJD:

Wash hands before eating, drinking, or smoking.



Cover cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings.

Wear surgical gloves when handling a patient's tissues, fluids, or when dressing wounds.

Use a mask if there is a risk of splashing body fluids.

To prevent variant CJD, travelers to Europe and other areas with cases of Mad Cow Disease may consider avoiding beef and beef products.

Medical tools that have come in contact with the patient will need special handling after use. People with suspected or confirmed CJD and those with family history should never donate blood, tissues, or organs.

For More Information, Visit:

1. www.maine.gov/dhhs/CJD
2. www.cdc.gov/prions/cjd
3. www.cdc.gov/prions/vcjd

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.

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