

**PPS in under two minutes**      *CONSTANCE INGRAM c 1992*

Have you tried to explain Post Polio Syndrome to a friend or relative? Maybe half-way through you notice them nodding off?

Try this two-minute drill.

Our brain communicates with our muscles through the nerves. Polio destroys those nerve cells causing our muscles to die. The beautiful thing about nerves is that they help each other. When one goes down others help out, so a person can lose many nerve cells and not experience much dysfunction. Most Polio survivors have been living in this state of fewer nerve cells for years. If they were very young when they contracted Polio, they may have grown up thinking this was normal. All people's nerve cells die off with age. For the normal person, having many nerve cells, this is not a problem. For those of us that have been living with a reduced number of nerve cells, this can result in a variety of symptoms including weakness, fatigue and pain, to name just a few.

**Some Examples:**

Polio stuff or PPS stuff, or you know what I mean: Polio folks get up in the morning, too tired, moving slow, and have spaghetti for breakfast so they can take their medicine.

Polio folks have a "piano player mind" -- doesn't shut off when you need to rest the most -- sugar does shut the body down, and revs the mind up.

Polio folks are often misunderstood. What comes out of the mouth is sometimes said faster (or slower) and does not keep up with the brain. We know what we want to say but have one heck of a time getting it out.

Polio folks have eyes that focus sometimes, and sometimes not. They can miss an entire chapter in the book they are reading, and hope they signed a contract right, if they could read it in the first place. Eyes twitching, usually indicates they are on circuit overload.

Polio folks, largely Type A's, are definitely driven beyond realization that they hit the Polio wall sometime back but didn't even notice. They say they will pace, will stop soon and lie down. Sometimes they do lie down, and then all of a sudden are up and at it again, not even thinking that they made a "deal" to go rest. The scrolling piano player mind again, wouldn't shut off long enough to allow them to rest in the first place.

PPS folks are successful people who drove themselves hard for those successes. Three times harder than the average "normal" person.

Polio folks are afraid of imposing on others, would rather do it themselves than dare to ask for any help. Tote that barge, lift that bale, even in the laps in their wheelchairs. "No, I'm fine, I can do it" -- more Type A.

Polio folks can be starving, and then after eating, feel sick. Soft muscle, any soft muscle can be affected by PPS. Eating too fast may be a key.

Polio folks have heartburn, lots of us have hiatal hernias,

Polio folks, or lots of them, have high blood pressure.

Polio folks often get the "oh, but you look like a million" -- it is downright impossible to explain this.

Polio folks often have allergies, you can tell by the Kleenexes in the car, in the kitchen, by the bed, by the sofa, and the ones still sticking out of the nose.

Polio folks have itchy ears, hence the mad dash for a Bobbie pin to help alleviate the wild-itch, symptomatic nerve system?? Some PPS doctors say.

PPS folks have a thermostat problem, body temperature low, legs frozen to the ground, top half burning up and sweats -- menopause may be excluded here.

PPS folks have a real thing with sensitivity - cold or hot, or feelings hurt, emotions on high.

Polio folks sometimes have a startle reflex problem. You can tell this easily the next time they are startled from a piece of lint floating in the air, and they have landed in the arms or lap of a stranger

A PPSer may never have originally known anyone else with Polio, but when PPS hits it is critical for them to find a true peer group for support and to gather the knowledge that the ones that started with PPS earlier have already gathered, sorted through and found to be accurate and helpful.