

Growth Hormone Deficiency

Series N. 2



Patient's Guide

Easy Readability Leaflet

Growth Hormone Deficiency - Series 2 (Revised August 2006)

This leaflet was produced by Fernando Vera MSc and Prof Gary Butler at the Institute of Health Sciences, University of Reading, Reading, UK (August, 2006). Some portions of the text were extracted or modified from the Growth and Growth Disorders Booklet Series (Third edition, 2000)* and may be used in conjunction with these as they provide a choice of leaflets providing the same information, but for people of different ages and reading abilities. The numbering sequence in each series is the same for easy cross-reference. The original leaflet series can be also obtained from the links given at the end.

All illustrations were created and produced by Fernando Vera MSc.

This leaflet is part of the Hormone Disorders Leaflet Series. The following are also available:

- Series N 3.** Puberty and the Growth Hormone Deficient Child.
- Series N 4.** Precocious Puberty
- Series N 5.** Emergency Information for Children with Cortisol and GH Deficiencies and those Experiencing Recurrent Hypoglycaemia.
- Series N 6.** Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
- Series N 7.** Growth Hormone Deficiency in Young Adults.
- Series N 10.** Constitutional delay of growth and puberty
- Series N 11.** Multiple Pituitary Hormone Deficiency
- Series N 12.** Diabetes Insipidus
- Series N 13.** Craniopharyngioma
- Series N 14.** Intrauterine Growth Retardation or Small Gestational Age
- Series N 15.a.** Hyperthyroidism
- Series N 15.b.** Hypothyroidism
- Series N. 16.** Type 2 Diabetes and Obesity

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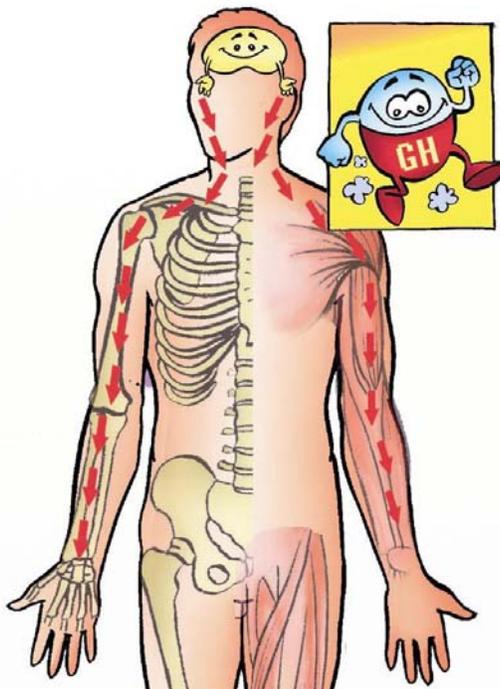
*Written by Dr Richard Stanhope (Gt. Ormond Street/Middlesex Hospital, London) and Mrs Vreli Fry (Child Growth Foundation)

Hello!

Today we'll tell you about **Growth Hormone Deficiency or GHD**. You may think that it sounds a bit difficult, but do not worry! We'll tell you what it means, why it happens and how doctors treat it.

But first, let's talk a bit about your body...

The brain is a very important organ. The brain acts like the "boss" by telling the body when and how much to grow. It does this by making and sending messengers to your bones and muscles. These messengers are called **growth hormones**.



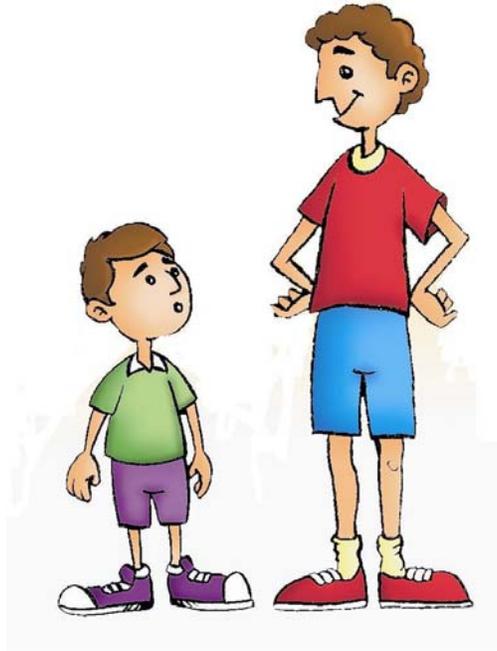
What is Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD)?

Growth Hormone Deficiency or GHD in short, happens when your brain is not making growth hormone. Without these messengers your body will not know when and how much to grow!

Why does this happen to children?

Doctors say that this happens when some parts in the brain stop working. As a result, the brain cannot make growth hormone any longer.

Not having growth hormone in your body could slow down your growth. To avoid this and make you grow normally, doctors will give you a special medicine.



How is it treated?

Doctors will need to do some tests before they can start any treatment. These tests may include:

- A Brain Scan: this special camera lets doctors see pictures of your brain (don't worry this doesn't hurt!)
- Taking a bit of your blood: this doesn't usually hurt and will be very helpful in your treatment.

Once doctors have finished with these tests, they can start giving you medicine. As mentioned before, your brain is not making enough growth messengers. This medicine you'll take has growth messengers in the amount your body needs. This will help you to grow normally.

It's important that you take this medicine as indicated by your doctor. Otherwise, you may not grow as much as your mates!

When and how much medicine is needed?

Doctors will tell your mum or your dad how much of this medicine is needed. You will need to take it every day, usually in the evenings before bedtime.

How do I take this medicine?

This medicine is given in small amounts by injection. You will feel a slight pinch, but this will not hurt! This needle may come in a fun shape, similar to a pen and in different colours.

Congratulations!

Now you know about GHD, why it happens and how it's treated. If you have not understood some things in this leaflet, don't feel shy to ask your doctor or other friendly people in the hospital. They will happily explain these or any other doubts you may have.

