

Myasthenia Gravis: neuromuscular disorder characterized by **severe weakness** of one or more groups of **skeletal muscles**

→ **antibodies** against **acetylcholine** receptors on the surface of skeletal muscles (**autoimmune-thymus gland**)

◦ **assessment**: **MUSCLE WEAKNESS!** — weakness depends on muscles affected

- **ptosis** of eyelids; **diplopia**
- difficulty chewing or swallowing; **voice weak**
- **mask-like** facial expression
- weakness of extremities, resp system
- muscle weakness w/ activity - restored by **rest**

→ **myasthenic crisis**: resp distress, difficulty talking/chewing

◦ **diagnostics**: diagnostic confirmation is made by IV administration of **edrophonium (Tensilon)**

→ w/ **TENSION test** weakness subsides with administration (relieves weakness in a few seconds; the restored muscle strength dissipates in minutes)

- **acetylcholine receptor antibody titer**
- chest radiography may show **enlargement** of thymus (**thymoma**)
- **electromyography**: measures electrical potential of muscles

◦ **medical management**:

- **anticholinesterase drug**; **pyridostigmine**
- **prednisone**, immunosuppressant
- **acute**: **plasmapheresis** bad antibody
- meds to promote neurotransmission
- **surgical**: removal of **thymus gland**

nursing management:

- provide periods of **rest**; **elevate HOB**
- promote independence, teach to **balance rest w/ activity**
- suction secretions (**oral-nasal suction equipment**)
- monitor for severe **resp compromise** - intubation traw & mechanical ventilation

Bell's Palsy: inflammation occurs around one of the paired facial nerves, blocking

motor impulses on **one side** of the face

→ cause unknown; **viral** link suspected

◦ **assessment**:

- **facial pain**; pain behind ear; numbness
- **diminished blink reflex**, **ptosis** of eyelid
- **tearing** on affected side

◦ **diagnostic**

- based on **SIS** & **visual exam** of face

◦ **medical management**:

- **corticosteroids** & **antiviral acyclovir (zovirax)** to inhibit viral replication & shorten duration of symptoms
- **analgesics** for pain

◦ **nursing management**:

- obtain **hx**; **viral infection**
- perform **physical exam** to determine which side of face
- assess for **speech impairment** & observe ability to **chew/swallow food**

