

Inclusion Body Myositis (IBM) - Symptoms and Overview

Whole body: The muscles are often affected in an asymmetrical way with the muscles on one side of the body being weaker than those on the other side. The pattern of weakness in IBM is characteristic.

Throat: Swallowing muscles are affected in some people, but this is a rarely a significant problem early on and most do not encounter severe swallowing problems.

speech is rarely affected.

IBM is a slowly progressing condition causing a gradual deterioration in muscle strength over years.

The condition does not affect the heart, eyes, gut or bladder. It does not affect the function of the brain or sensation.

Pain: The condition itself does not cause pain. However, weakened muscles can predispose to problems such as falls resulting in injuries affecting bones, joints and soft tissues.

Arms: In most people the forearm or other muscles are affected first.

Hands: Weak forearm muscles affect the ability to flex the wrists and fingers)

Rising and climbing: people affected by IBM may fall and can have difficulty climbing stairs, getting out of a chair.

Legs: In most people the quadriceps muscles are affected first. The most frequently affected muscles are the quadriceps (the thigh muscles, which straighten the knee joint)

Overview of Inclusion body myositis (IBM)

Inclusion body myositis (IBM) is a muscle-wasting condition, which causes muscles to become thin and weak. It was recognised as a condition in its own right in the 1960s. It usually occurs in mid to later life and is more common in men than women.

For muscle specialists, it is the most common muscle-wasting condition diagnosed in those who are over the age of 50 but it is sufficiently rare that most general practitioners (GPs) will not have looked after patients with IBM before, and many hospital doctors will not have heard of the condition.

Life-expectancy is not reduced in those with IBM, and the condition usually progresses slowly, over many years. People with IBM experience varying degrees of disability as the condition progresses, and usually require adaptations to the home or work environment, as well as the use of mobility aids.

