

What is Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD)?

Autonomic dysreflexia, also known as hyperreflexia, means an over-activity of the Autonomic Nervous System causing an abrupt onset of excessively high blood pressure. Persons at risk for this problem generally have injury levels above T-5. Autonomic dysreflexia can develop suddenly and is potentially life threatening and is considered a medical emergency. If not treated promptly and correctly, it may lead to seizures, stroke, and even death.

AD occurs when an irritating stimulus is introduced to the body below the level of spinal cord injury, such as an overfull bladder. The stimulus sends nerve impulses to the spinal cord, where they travel upward until they are blocked by the lesion at the level of injury. Since the impulses cannot reach the brain, a reflex is activated that increases activity of the sympathetic portion of autonomic nervous system. This results in spasms and a narrowing of the blood vessels, which causes a rise in the blood pressure.



- A fast, major increase in blood pressure - 20-40 mm Hg systolic higher than usual.
- A pounding headache
- Heavy Sweating
- Flushed or reddened skin
- Goose bumps
- Blurry vision or seeing spots
- A stuffy nose
- Anxiety or jitters
- Tightness in your chest, flutters in your heart or chest, or trouble breathing

If you would like more information, feel free to call the office at 1-800-333-0782 or you can send an [email](#), be sure to include your mailing address for faster service. You can also purchase the DVD or CD.