



How Many Neurons Am I Losing As I Age?

A Bruno Byte “Tidbit”

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Question: My leg muscle weakness seems to be increasing faster as I get older. I read that polio survivors lose 7% of muscle strength each year. How do I stop losing strength?

Answer: PPS symptoms on their own don't increase more quickly as you get older, but, two things do happen over time:

- 1) Everyone over the age of 60 loses 1% of their motor neurons each year, not 1% of their muscle strength. A study by Dr. Alan McComas of untreated polio survivors (untreated meaning that they did not slow down, use braces, crutches or wheelchairs) found that they lost as much as 14% of their remaining MOTOR NEURONS (7% each year) over the two years of his study.
- 2) Some polio survivors will ignore muscle weakness for years and so do get weaker over time. One of our Post-Polio Institute studies found that polio survivors who applied our “conserve to preserve” protocol closer to the beginning of their symptoms had less muscle weakness, fatigue and pain after treatment than those who waited to be treated.

Bottom Line: Treating PPS sooner is better than later because symptoms will increase if you don't treat them. Some polio survivors will ignore PPS symptoms until they “need” an assistive device. Unfortunately by then it's too late because the motor neurons have died a natural or unnatural death.

The Encyclopedia of Polio and Post-Polio Sequelae

contains all of [Dr. Richard Bruno's](#) articles, monographs, commentaries and “Bruno Bytes”
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