

Bell's Palsy

Bell's palsy is a weakness or paralysis of the muscles that control the expression on one side of the face. The severity can range from mild weakness to total paralysis. The disorder results from damage to a facial nerve, one of which runs beneath each ear to the muscles on the same side of your face.

Though the onset of Bell's palsy can be abrupt, the cause is unknown and its development isn't well understood. The prevalent theory is that the facial nerve becomes swollen and injured, perhaps by a viral infection. In some cases the nerve then has no room to expand within its bony channel, and this restriction or compression then causes the Bell's palsy.

While Bell's palsy usually isn't serious, it can be a blow to the self-esteem because it may result in a droopy appearance to the face. For most people the disorder clears up on its own within weeks or months.

Signs & Symptoms

Individuals experiencing Bell's palsy may exhibit some or all of the following symptoms:

- Pain in the vicinity of the ear a day or two before the Bell's palsy occurs
- Sudden paralysis or weakness on one side of your face, making it difficult to close one eye
- Facial drooping and difficulty with facial expressions
- Facial stiffness or feeling as though your face is being pulled to one side
- Possible pain behind or in front of your ear on the affected side
- Sounds appearing louder on the affected side
- Loss of taste on the front portion of your tongue
- Changes in the amount of tears and saliva your body produces
- Headache

Therapeutic Approach

In addition to conventional measures, which may include medication, complementary modalities such as CranioSacral Therapy can play an important role in a comprehensive therapeutic approach. In general, the earlier Bell's palsy is addressed with complementary therapies such as CranioSacral Therapy, the better. Mild cases often disappear within a month, though recovery from a case involving total paralysis is variable.