

## WHAT IS PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME?

### What is it?

Prader-Willi Syndrome is a disorder, which is sometimes associated with, but not a subtype of, autism. This was first described by Prader, Labhart and Willi in 1956.

### What is the incidence of this condition?

Prader-Willi Syndrome affects approximately 1 in 10,000 people.

### What is the cause of the condition?

Most individuals suffering from this disorder are missing a small portion of chromosome 15, which appears to come from the paternal side of the family. When a small portion of chromosome 15 is missing and comes from the maternal side, the person may suffer from Angelman Syndrome.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

Individuals may vary in their picture of strengths and difficulties. The classical features of this disorder include an obsession with food, which is often associated with impulsive eating, compact body build, underdeveloped sexual characteristics, and poor muscle tone. Because of their obsession with food, many individuals with Prader-Willi Syndrome are overweight. Most individuals afflicted with Prader-Willi Syndrome have mild learning difficulties. There may also be delays in language and motor development, learning disabilities, feeding problems in infancy, sleep disturbances, skin picking, temper tantrums, and individuals may have a high tolerance pain threshold.

### What type of treatment?

Behaviour modification is the most usual form of therapy.

### Resources

#### **UK**

PWSA (UK)  
33 Leopold Street  
Derby DE1 2HF  
England  
Tel: 01332 365 676  
Fax: 01332 360 401  
<http://www.pwsa-uk.demon.co.uk>

#### **US**

The Prader-Willi Syndrome Association  
2510 S. Brentwood Blvd  
Suite 220  
St. Louis  
MO 63144  
Telephone: 1- 800-926-4797

#### **Canada**

Ontario Prader-Willi Syndrome Association  
1910 Yonge Street  
Fourth Floor  
Toronto  
Ontario M4S 3B2  
Canada  
Telephone 1-800-563- 1123.