

Myalgia Syndrome/Eosinophilia (EMS)

What is it?

- **Myalgia**- is a disorder in which eosinophilia is combined with muscle pain, tenderness, swelling, fatigue, cough, shortness of breath/SOB, rashes, cough and neurologic abnormalities
- **EMS**- incurable and sometimes fatal flu-like neurological condition that is believed to have been caused by ingestion of poorly produced L-tryptophan supplements causing an increase in eosinophil granulocytes in the patient's blood



Recommendations:

- **Alternative**- recommendation for tryptophan, large doses lead to the production of metabolites, some of which interfere with normal histamine degradation; excessive histamine activity has been linked with myalgia and blood eosinophils

Facts:

- **Rare**- this syndrome showed up in the 1990's in people who took large amounts of tryptophan; sold in health food stores given for sleep
 - Impurity- in the tryptophan probably caused the syndrome not the tryptophan
- **Myalgia Syndrome** – can last for weeks or months after the tryptophan is discontinued, can cause permanent neurological damage, in rare cases can cause death
- **Cure**- none known
- **L-tryptophan**- was banned for sale in 1991 in the United States, other countries have followed suit
 - February 2001- FDA loosened the restrictions on the marketing of tryptophan (no importation)
 - Impurities- seen in a single Japanese manufacturer/Showa Denko, more than 60 different impurities were identified associated with cases of EMS

What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- physical rehabilitation is recommended
- **See a Registered Dietitian**- for help as needed

