Autoimmune Encephalitis

Autoimmune encephalitis (AE) is a serious medical condition in which the immune system attacks the brain, impairing function. AE occurs in men, women and children of all ages. Early diagnosis and rapid, aggressive treatment provides the best opportunity for quick and full recovery.

Learn the symptoms of autoimmune encephalitis (AE) and don’t wait for a referral to a major medical center to diagnose your patients. For more information, please visit AEalliance.org.

### Symptoms

AE can produce a very wide range of neuro-psychiatric symptoms, including:

- weakness or numbness
- loss of balance
- slowed or blurred speech
- loss of ability to speak
- ataxia
- involuntary movements
- distorted vision
- cognitive impairment
- memory disturbance
- decreased level of consciousness
- seizures
- partial or complete loss of appetite
- food and drink aversions
- excessive eating without feeling sated
- agitation
- inability to sleep
- loss of inhibition
- rapid, pressured, or involuntary speech
- hallucinations and/or delirium
- paranoid thoughts
- severe anxiety

### Diagnosis

A quick diagnosis allows for early and aggressive treatment, improving the opportunity for quick and full recovery. When you suspect AE, initiate testing as soon as possible. Diagnostic tests can include:

- Blood test for specific antibodies, i.e. Anti-NMDA Receptor antibodies
- Blood test for inflammation markers
- EEG (Electroencephalograph)
- MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

Abnormal EEG or MRI can be used to rule out purely psychiatric causes of illness.

### Treatment

The four most common “first line” treatments include:

- removal of a teratoma (if present)
- anti-inflammatory drugs (ie. steroids)
- plasmapheresis, and
- intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG).

Learn More about Autoimmune Encephalitis at AEAlliance.org