Essential Tremor
(Also called Familial Tremor)

Essential Tremor (ET) is the most common neurologic movement disorder. It may affect as many as 10 million people in the United States. ET is a chronic (long-term) condition. Its main symptom is an uncontrollable, rhythmic tremor (shaking) of a body part, in most cases the hands and arms. In some people it may, over time, affect the head, voice, tongue, legs, or trunk. However, in many people, ET may be relatively non-progressive and the tremor may be mild throughout life.

The cause of ET is unknown. It often runs in families. You may have a relative who has a tremor like yours. Many people with ET are otherwise healthy.

ET can begin in the teenage or early adult years, but often does not appear until later in life. It may begin as only a slight tremor when you are under stress. ET may become more evident with time. The tremor may be most visible when you hold your arms out or when you are doing a normal task. Stress or too much caffeine or other similar stimulants may temporarily make the tremor worse. Some prescription drugs may also make the tremor worse. Tremors usually stop during sleep. They are either absent or minor during periods of rest.

Although the tremor may become more noticeable with time, it generally does not lead to disability. Sometimes people are self-conscious about their tremor. There are medications that may help. Your doctor may prescribe them for you.

For More Information Contact:

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We Move: Worldwide Education and Awareness for Movement Disorders