

Stop Spilling Your Soup!

THE COMPLETE ESSENTIAL TREMOR SOLUTION



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To God my Father and King, who created me in His perfect image, to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, who calls me worthy even though I am a sinner, to the Holy Spirit, who guides me daily in all I do, I give You all the glory for what is created and written in this book. You gave me life, You give me breath. You save a place for me in heaven. You give me inspiration to write and lead people to the truth. You comfort me and You give me strength to do the work You have called me to do. Without You I am nothing and this work would not be possible.

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Thank You.

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INTRODUCTION



WHO I AM

My name is Darlene Mayo (née Lobel). I am a board-certified neurosurgeon who began practicing in 2007. I am trained and certified to practice all aspects of neurosurgery. The patients I have spent the most time treating over the last 10 years are much like many of you—they are people with tremors who want to know why they shake and how they can stop shaking.

I have known I wanted to be a doctor ever since I can remember, and I decided to become a neurosurgeon when I was in college. I had “shadowed” different doctors to see what their day-to-day lives were like. I looked into pediatrics, general surgery, and obstetrics. But the moment I walked into the operating room of Dr. Blaine Nashold and saw a living brain, I knew. That was it.

I love that the brain is so complex and that we know so little about it. I love that I could spend my whole life researching and practicing and never figure out all of the brain’s intricacies. I think one of the things I love most about the brain is its possibilities. With so much unknown, anything is possible. I believe we have barely tapped into the power and capabilities

of the brain. One of my goals in life is to learn how to use the brain to its fullest potential and to teach others how to do the same.

I spent 10 years in clinical practice at some of the top hospitals in the country helping people the best way I knew how—by sharing my medical knowledge, helping them develop the best plans for their treatment, and operating when I thought it would benefit them. I love this part of my career, because I have been able to see in an instant how life changing treatment such as deep brain stimulation can be.

I also have dedicated myself to researching new and better ways to treat patients with tremors and to helping patients make the best decisions for their medical treatment. I had the privilege and honor of working with Dr. Alim Louis Benabid in France, at one of the top research facilities in the world, for a couple of years. Dr. Benabid discovered the use of deep brain stimulation as a treatment for tremors due to essential tremor and Parkinson’s disease, and he continues to pioneer many other innovations in medicine and scientific research to this day.

Furthermore, I am a teacher. I love sharing my knowledge with patients and doctors-in-training. I believe knowledge should be shared so that the next generation can be even better equipped than we are to challenge the limits of science and find cures for diseases and conditions. There are very few things to which I can compare the joy of seeing people—from medical students and neurosurgery residents (doctors-in-training) to those with limited or no medical knowledge—understand something new about the marvels of the brain.

So why did I write this e-book? Well, that is actually a very interesting story. I have always chosen to

live my life by having faith in God and following His lead. About two years ago, I felt led to open my home to two foster children. That in turn led me to some significant realizations. First, raising children as a single mother makes brain surgery seem like a walk in the park! Seriously, though, these children are truly the joys and lights of my life, and they help me to grow in my faith daily. Along these lines, I realized that as much as I loved practicing neurosurgery, there was so much more that I could offer and learn. I began to view my calling in life in a broader way. I started to live my life walking day by day with God at my side and following His path for me, rather than the path that I had chosen on my own. So, over the last two years, my life has changed dramatically.

Almost a year ago, I was blessed to be able to adopt my children. God also brought my incredibly loving and amazing husband into my life. We were married a few months ago. With these beautiful changes in my life, I began to realize that my professional path must allow me to prioritize my family as well as my patients.

With great excitement, I decided to break from traditional neurosurgical practice. I began to consider new ways I could use my years of experience and medical knowledge to continue making an impact in the lives of my patients. Eventually, I was led to open a medical consulting business and to begin writing medical books for people looking for good quality information about available treatments. I have two goals in writing these books. First, it is important to me that people understand all of the treatment options out there, so part of this e-book focuses on non-medical and non-traditional therapies such as diet, exercise, and holistic treatments. I have worked hard to ensure there is reasonable scientific evidence to support the treatments included in this e-book.

Second, my patients often expressed that it was difficult to understand what they read about different treatments or what other doctors told them about their condition. I have always prioritized explaining

complex medical procedures in easy-to-understand language. So, a large portion of this e-book is also dedicated to “translating” medical and surgical recommendations into clear and simple terms.

It is my hope that this e-book reaches and helps those of you who are looking for information but do not know where to start. I hope this e-book offers a beginning and helps you understand the basics about different ways tremor can be treated.

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

For people with tremor

I wrote this e-book primarily for those of you with essential tremor (ET) and tremors from other causes. I hope to help make your lives just a little better by giving you a guide, or handbook, if you will, of the best ideas I have studied, learned, and seen put into practice. Patients like you are the reason I went into medicine, and I have been blessed to be able to help hundreds of people with tremors through my career as a neurosurgeon. Now, I have come to realize that sharing my knowledge through this e-book carries the potential to reach infinitely more people with this condition.

For families of people with tremor

I also wrote this e-book for families of people with tremor. Sometimes we want so much to help a family member who is suffering that we settle for whatever resources we can find. I want to give you good quality information so you can help family members who shake understand the causes of their tremors and the different treatments that could help them.

For students, residents, and practicing physicians

I realize, too, that students of medicine, residents, and practicing physicians may find this e-book useful. This is meant to be understood by those without any medical knowledge, so it is not, say, a practitioner’s how-to guide on managing patients with essential

tremor. But perhaps this e-book will inspire a medical student to go into the field of neurosurgery or neurology and make an even greater impact in the lives of people with tremors. It is my hope that this e-book will also raise awareness of ET in the medical community and give doctors who do not generally treat this condition a resource for providing hope to their patients. I always find it difficult to tell a patient that I do not know what else I can do for them and that there is no one else to whom I can refer them. But it is so nice to be able to follow that up with this: there is more that **you** can do.

For researchers and innovators

Some of the concepts presented in this e-book, particularly the holistic approaches, are in the very early stages of discovery. They need further scientific research to find the best ways they can be used to help people with tremors. Perhaps something in this e-book will inspire a researcher to design a study to find answers or motivate an innovator to develop a new product to better control tremors.

HOW TO USE THIS E-BOOK

There are many ways to read this e-book. Some of you may be interested in reading it from start to finish. If you do, you will have a comprehensive understanding of the various holistic, medical, and surgical treatments available for tremors due to ET and some other causes.

Some of you may be interested in just one particular area. For example, maybe your doctor has recommended you have an MRI-guided focused ultrasound, and you want to know more about that. Or maybe you want to know about what you can do to help your tremors without ever setting foot in a doctor's office. The sections and chapters in this e-book are organized so that you can easily access the specific information you need. In addition, some chapters contain hyperlinks to other relevant sections of the e-book that you may find useful, as well.

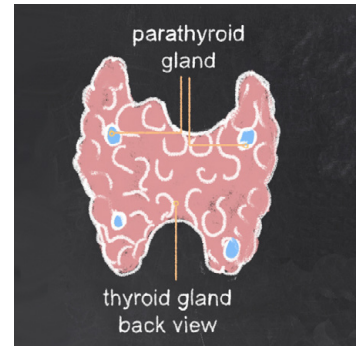
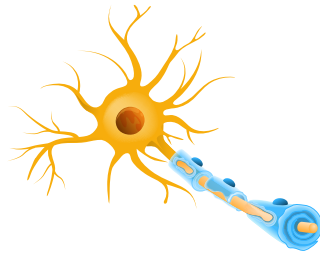
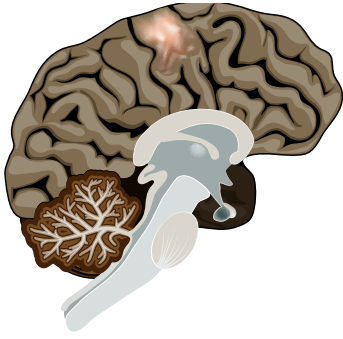
This e-book is divided into five different sections. In Section 1, you will learn about the different causes of “tremors,” or shaking. In Section 2, I describe various at-home treatments that you can do yourself to help reduce your tremors, from diet changes and easy exercises to herbal supplements you can take. Section 3 contains a wealth of information on the medical providers who can help figure out the cause of your tremors and recommend treatments. This section also describes in detail the different medical and surgical treatments available to help control tremors. Section 4 contains information on what are considered “alternative” medicine treatments, including acupuncture and other therapies, as well as information about the latest research studies on ET. Section 5 outlines strategies to help you make decisions about your medical care.

Keep in mind that it is unlikely you will significantly reduce your tremors with any one of these treatments alone. Most people will need to use a combination of different treatments to see the best results. Also remember that what works for one person may not work for another person.

Remember, too, that there is no cure for ET (at the time of the writing of this e-book). Many of the techniques I describe in this book can help make your tremors better. Most have documented scientific research behind them, and I tell you about these studies in each chapter. I also include helpful tips and tools that have not been studied formally but have anecdotally helped others.

Because updates to medical knowledge happen frequently, I keep a blog on my website (www.helpfortremors.com) that provides the most up-to-date information on new treatments and changes in current treatments. For news on major breakthroughs, you can subscribe to email updates through the website.

Please read through this e-book in the way you find most helpful, and feel free to email with any questions you may have.



SECTION

1

WHY AM I SHAKING?



EVERYONE SHAKES

Seeing your own arm shake can be scary! “That isn’t supposed to happen,” you may think. Then you may decide to look on the internet, maybe using Google or the symptom checker on WebMD, to figure out what is wrong. Sometimes this can be helpful. But sometimes you may read things that are frightening. Remember that some information on the internet is of good quality, while other websites give you “half-truths,” particularly where medical conditions are concerned. So how are you supposed to know where to look and what to do?

First, I will ask you to stop for a moment, take a deep breath in, and then breathe out slowly. Know that you are in the right place to find quality information that will likely help ease your fears. This e-book is based on years and years of my experience evaluating and treating patients who shake. In this section, I will tell you about the most common causes of shaking and the symptoms you may see with each of these conditions. You should also know that unless your doctor has told you that you have essential tremor or a similar disorder, there is a good

chance that you do not have a medical condition that is causing you to shake.

Did you know that everyone has some tremor? It’s true! Everybody shakes sometimes and to some degree. This type of tremor is known as “physiologic tremor.” Physiologic tremor is a very fine shaking in your hands and fingers that comes and goes. In some people it is barely noticeable, while in others it can be quite obvious. You may see this tremor when you are sitting still, or when you are trying to do an activity, like eating or drinking. Usually, physiologic tremor causes shaking in both hands, although one hand may shake more than the other.¹ Researchers do not understand what causes this type of shaking, but they do know the kinds of things that make this “natural tremor” worse. These include caffeine, too much or too little sugar in your system, smoking, certain medicines, recreational drugs, alcohol, stress, and tired muscles. Interestingly, the things that make physiologic tremor worse often make tremors due to other causes worse, as well.

WHAT MAKES “NATURAL” (PHYSIOLOGIC) TREMOR WORSE?

Caffeine

Caffeine is a substance found in coffee, some teas and soft drinks, and certain foods, such as chocolate. It is considered a stimulant, which means many people use it to be more alert in the mornings or during the day when they feel low on energy. Caffeine can have some positive effects on the brain, including enhancing your memory.² Recent research also shows that small amounts of caffeine over a period of time can reduce your risk of developing Parkinson’s or Alzheimer’s diseases.³ However, caffeine, particularly in high amounts, can also have negative effects on the nervous system and can make tremors of any kind (physiologic or otherwise) much worse.⁴

- » One way to reduce your tremors (due to any cause) may be to decrease your caffeine intake.

Sugar

There has been a lot of discussion in recent years about how harmful processed sugar (table sugar and added sugars in foods) can be to your body. Too much processed sugar can lead to everything from early heart disease and stroke to weight gain and diabetes.⁵ There is even a link between sugar intake and the progression of certain cancers.^{6,7}

Eating too much sugar causes problems with the way your body naturally processes sugar and turns it into “nutrients” you can use.⁸ The chemical that controls the amount of sugar in your body (your “blood sugar”) is called insulin. Insulin can be released in your body in really high amounts after you eat a lot of sugar. As a result, your blood sugar levels may first become very high (also known as hyperglycemia) and then very low (also known as hypoglycemia). When your blood sugar is very low, you can start to shake,⁹ or the tremors you already have can become much worse. When blood sugar is critically low, you can even develop seizures.¹⁰

- » Another way to reduce tremors may be to limit the amount of processed sugar you eat.



Smoking

Did you know that smoking cigarettes or using tobacco in other forms can cause you to shake?¹¹ Most people who smoke will tell you that one of the reasons they do it is to calm themselves down. However, studies have shown that nicotine is a stimulant and that smoking actually increases anxiety.¹² Further, research studies have found that smoking is harmful to many parts of your body, including your lungs, heart, and brain,¹³ and also makes tremors worse.^{11,14} Quitting smoking even for a day can help lessen tremors.¹⁵

Keep in mind that the first few days or weeks after you stop smoking, your body may go through “withdrawal” from nicotine (the main ingredient in cigarettes), which can make your tremors worse.¹⁶ This effect should fade away the longer you go without smoking. You can find many resources on how to quit smoking on the website www.smokefree.gov, and there are many apps you can get for your smartphone that may be helpful. Also, your doctor can give you medicines to help you quit.

- » Quitting smoking is another way you can slow down your tremors.