

Australian Pituitary Foundation Ltd

The Australian Pituitary Foundation Ltd was founded in Sydney in 1994 by pituitary patients and family members, with the endorsement of Australian endocrinologists, neurosurgeons, radiation therapists and endocrine nurses, who saw the need to support people who have rare conditions of the pituitary gland. After five years the APF developed into a company with benevolent status, limited by guarantee. In October 2003, The Children's Growth Foundation (CGF) joined the APF, and the APF is continuing to support families of children affected by pituitary disorders.

The objectives of the Foundation are to

- provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas and for the discussion of problems related to pituitary disorders
- promote public awareness of pituitary disorders and the need for government support
- act as a resource group providing support and disseminating information
- encourage scientific research for the prevention, alleviation, care, treatment and cure of pituitary disorders

Funding

Funds for the purposes of striving towards our objectives come from membership fees, donations, fund-raising and sponsorship. Members who join help not only themselves but the Foundation as well. We encourage corporate sponsors. The APF is a registered not-for-profit charity with Deductible Gift Recipient status. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Please go to our website www.pituitary.com.au to securely donate on-line.

The Pituitary Gland - What Is It?

The pituitary gland is commonly referred to as the master gland because of the roles it plays in controlling the function of all aspects of the body's vital endocrine system. It is a soft reddish brown pea sized gland encased in a protective box in the skull located at the base of the brain. The pituitary is connected by a stalk to an area of the brain called the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus is a messenger to the pituitary gland which then secretes hormones through the blood to a collection of glands within the body. These glands in turn produce hormones that make men different from women, control growth in childhood, appetite, metabolism, body composition, vitality, emotions, sexual maturity and reproduction, sex drive and virtually everything that makes life worth celebrating.

What Can Cause Things To Go Wrong?

- Genetic disturbances
- Tumour growth
- Infection
- Inflammation
- Damage from head trauma
- Injury from surgery or radiotherapy

The Pituitary secretes many important hormones that have different effects on other glands in the body. When the pituitary gland is not working correctly, many things can go wrong. Most of the events listed above destroy the function of the gland. Some tumours of the pituitary gland can over secrete hormones normally produced by the gland itself. This overproduction of pituitary hormones can cause severe health problems.

When To Seek Diagnosis?

The Foundation encourages people to recognise their own symptoms and seek appropriate treatment. If you think you might have a pituitary disorder speak with your health professional and ask to be referred to an Endocrinologist (a specialist in hormones). Pituitary disorders are relatively rare but complicated conditions that require specialist coordinated health care. Health providers, patients and those who interact with them, all benefit from a greater understanding of the intricacies and management of pituitary disorders.

The time between onset of a pituitary disorder and diagnosis can be many years resulting in gradual but continuous decline in a person's well-being. Once diagnosed, patients and carers often feel isolated due to a lack of contact with others in a similar situation, overwhelmed or confused by the new diagnosis and treatment decisions. **This is where the Australian Pituitary Foundation can help.**

