



Essential Tremor (ET) is a neurological disorder that causes rhythmic trembling of the hands, head, legs, or voice and affects an estimated 10 million men and women in the United States alone. It may occur at any age from childhood to late adulthood and in some cases can be hereditary. ET frequently affects every day activities such as eating, drinking and writing.

## Diagnosis and Treatment

ET is diagnosed by medical history and neurological evaluation. Consult a doctor who has been trained to diagnose and treat tremor, preferably a neurologist who specializes in movement disorders. While no cure has been found to date, medications and surgical treatments can help control tremor in many patients.

## What is the Difference Between ET & Parkinson's Disease (PD)?

**Type of tremor** - The tremor in ET generally occurs with action. The tremor of PD most commonly occurs when the limb or other body part is at rest (resting tremor).

- **Additional symptoms** - The primary symptom of ET is tremor. PD has additional features, such as slowness, stiffness, balance problems, and shuffling gait.
- **Body parts affected by tremor** - ET and PD both involve tremor of the arms/hands, but head and voice tremor most commonly appear in ET and almost never in PD.
- **Handwriting** - In ET handwriting is often large and shaky, whereas in PD, handwriting is often very small (micrographia).
- **Family history** - Persons with ET often have a family history of tremor, whereas in PD, family history of PD or tremor is much less common.
- **Alcohol** - ET is often reduced by drinking alcohol whereas in PD, alcohol generally does not improve tremor.
- **Medications** - ET generally does not respond to medications used for PD, and PD generally does not respond to medications used for ET.

## Support for ET

For a list of local support groups and other resources go online to [www.thehopenet.org](http://www.thehopenet.org)

Information adapted from thehopenet.org and International Essential Tremor Foundation website



"I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." 3 John 1:2  
This health promotion flyer is provided by St. Mary Parish Nurse Ministry