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Ehlers-Danlos Syndromes (EDS) are a group of 13 heritable connective tissue disorders, which means that you can get it from your parents. The conditions are caused by genetic changes that affect connective tissue, which is tissue that connects, supports, binds, or separates other tissues or organs. Each type of EDS has its own set of features to identify it. Some features are seen across all types of EDS, including joint hypermobility, when joints move beyond their normal range, often due to loose ligaments; skin hyperextensibility, a condition where the skin can be stretched beyond its normal limits because of a problem with the body's collagen and elastin proteins; and tissue fragility, excessive weakness and susceptibility of tissues to tearing, bruising, and injury. Patients not meeting strict criteria for EDS may have hypermobility spectrum disorders (HSD) which are connective tissue disorders that cause joint hypermobility, instability, injury and pain. Other disorders such as fatigue, a feeling of weariness, tiredness, or lack of energy that can interfere with daily life; headaches, GI problems, a wide range of conditions affecting the digestive tract, with symptoms like abdominal pain, bloating, heartburn, nausea, and changes in bowel habits; and autonomic dysfunctions, a condition where the autonomic nervous system, which controls automatic bodily functions like heart rate, blood pressure, and digestion, doesn't work properly are often seen as part of EDS/HSD [Ehlers Danlos Society]. Symptoms of EDS and hypermobility may be traced to the parasympathetic, a division of the autonomic nervous system that promotes "rest and digest" functions, counteracting the "fight or flight" response of the sympathetic nervous system; and sympathetic nervous system, a part of the autonomic nervous system that triggers the body's "fight-or-flight" response to stress or danger; or oxidative stress, an imbalance between the production of free radicals and the body's ability to detoxify them through antioxidants, leading to cellular damage; and all are treatable.

As a practicing Clinical Internist, I am always prepared to diagnose a patient with numerous "somatic complaints", physical symptoms, like pain, fatigue, or dizziness, that cause significant distress or interfere with daily life, with a syndrome rather than to attribute them as psychosomatic, physical symptoms caused by mental factors like stress, anxiety, or emotional disturbance, which is always easier to do and which the majority of physicians prior to a patient's visit with me have done. Such applies to patients who present with undiagnosed Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) or Hypermobility Spectrum Disorder (HSD).



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It is important to seek out a clinician with expertise in EDS to make an accurate diagnosis and create a treatment plan. One of the nation's leading centers is Franklin Cardiovascular Associates, under the direction of Nicholas DePace, MD, FACC. They are located in Sicklerville, New Jersey. franklincardiovascular.com, (856) 589-6034