

hEDS vs. HSD: Solving the Genetic Mystery

If you are navigating the world of joint pain and dizziness, you will likely hear two terms used constantly: **hEDS** (Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome) and **HSD** (Hypermobility Spectrum Disorder).

Patients often ask, *"What is the difference? Is one worse than the other?"*

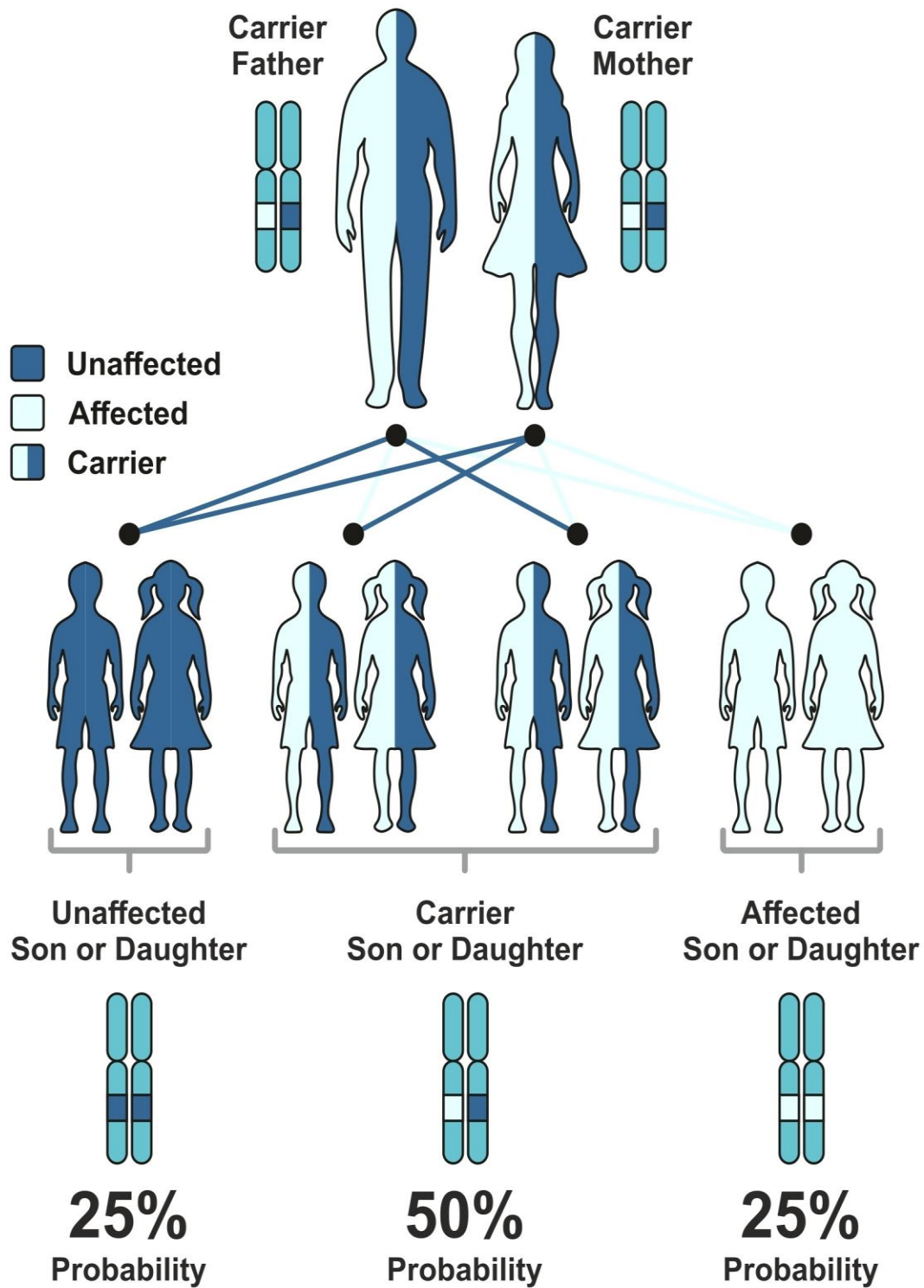
The answer lies in our DNA, but it is a bit of a mystery story.

The "Missing Gene" of hEDS

Doctors strongly suspect that hEDS is **Autosomal Dominant**.

- **Translation:** If you have it, there is a 50/50 chance you will pass it to your children.

Autosomal Recessive



Solving the Genetic Mystery

However, unlike the other types of EDS, scientists **haven't found the specific gene yet**. We know it runs in families; we know what it looks like, but we can't point to the exact spot on your DNA map that causes it.

HSD: The "Sibling" Diagnosis

Hypermobility Spectrum Disorder (HSD) is essentially the sibling of hEDS.

You receive this diagnosis when you have the symptoms—the flexible joints, the pain, the fatigue—but you don't *quite* meet the strict checklist for hEDS, or your family history is unclear.

The Bottom Line: Whether your chart says hEDS or HSD, the treatment is largely the same because the physical problems are almost identical.

The Rare Cousins: Vascular and Classical EDS

In specialized clinics, hEDS and HSD make up the vast majority of patients. It is very rare to walk in and find a case of **Vascular EDS** or **Classical EDS**.

- These types *do* have known genetic markers.
- If a doctor suspects these (due to dangerous symptoms like organ rupture or extremely stretchy skin), they will order genetic testing to confirm it.

The Real Culprit: Sympathetic & Parasympathetic Dysfunction

Whether you are labeled hEDS or HSD, you likely aren't just dealing with loose joints. You are dealing with a "wiring" problem that causes two main issues:

1. The Gas Pedal Fails (Sympathetic Withdrawal)

- **What happens:** You stand up, and your body forgets to pump blood upward.
- **The Result:** Orthostatic Dysfunction. You feel dizzy, your heart races, and you have chronic fatigue.

2. The Brake Pedal Gets Stuck (Parasympathetic Excess)

- **What happens:** Your body over-reacts to stress with too much "calming" signal.
- **The Result:** Syncope (fainting), digestive issues (stomach stops moving), anxiety, and inflammation.

Solving the Genetic Mystery

- **Crucially:** This "wiring glitch" actually **amplifies pain**. It turns the volume knob up on your nerves, making your joints hurt more than they should.

The "Fibromyalgia" Trap

This pain amplification leads to one of the most common mistakes in modern medicine.

At least one-third of hEDS/HSD patients have visited a rheumatologist and been diagnosed with **Fibromyalgia**.

- **The Misconception:** Fibromyalgia is often treated as a mystery pain condition.
- **The Reality:** For many, that "Fibromyalgia" is actually undiagnosed hEDS/HSD. The loose joints are causing the irritation, and the faulty nervous system (P&S dysfunction) is magnifying that pain signals.

If you have been told you have Fibromyalgia but also have flexible joints and dizziness, it might be time to look at your "wiring" instead of just treating the pain.