May 15th – June 15th 2010 is Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month in PA

So what is Tourette Syndrome (TS) and why should I be aware of it?

Tourette Syndrome is a condition of the brain that is passed down from a person’s parents and affects 3 in every 1,000 children in the U.S. If there are more than 333 students in your school, there is probably at least one student in your school who has Tourette Syndrome.

What is the Main Symptom of TS?

A person with Tourette Syndrome has “tics”. Tics are movements and sounds that are out of the person’s control. A tic can be any motion or sound. It can be something that is hard to notice like “throat clearing” or “rapid blinking” and it can be something easy to notice like “loud screeching” or “leg twitching”.

Tell me more about tics.

The tics that affect people with TS change often and they also come and go. This means that a person will have more tics some days than others. For example, a person with TS may have trouble with a head turning tic one day and then they may have an arm movement tic the next day. Sometimes they aren’t even aware of their tics, just like we aren’t always aware of when we blink.

How can I help someone with TS?

Tics get worse then a person is stressed, excited or when their attention has been drawn to their tics. The best thing that someone can do to help a person with TS is to ignore their tics and don’t ask them to stop ticking! If they could stop they would! Asking them to stop can make their tics worse! Can you stop blinking?

Is there anything else I should know?

You cannot “catch” Tourette Syndrome from someone who has it and TS is not an illness that will shorten their life. Other than having TS, they are the same as everyone else!

How can I learn more about TS?

Go to www.patsainc.org. This is the website of the Pennsylvania Tourette Syndrome Alliance or PA-TSA, located in Gettysburg, PA. PA-TSA helps students with TS and their families, educators and communities, by spreading awareness and understanding through information, training and support.

Help us let more people know about TS…tell a friend what you learned today!!!

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For more information contact Sherrie Sponseller at 717-337-1134.