



## Facts about Friedreich's Ataxia for those 4-12 years

**Q: What causes Friedreich's Ataxia?**

A: It's a mistake in a person's DNA which you are born with

**Q: Does Friedreich's Ataxia have another name?**

A: Sometimes it's shortened to FA.

**Q: What happens to people with Friedreich's Ataxia?**

A: People with FA have trouble with balance and coordination. The nerves in their legs and arms increasingly don't work properly, so people with FA will have walking difficulties. They often have a bent spine (scoliosis) in their back. FA also can affect the heart making people with FA possibly really tired. Sometimes, FA can affect the way people talk and hear.

**Q: Does all of this stuff happen right away to people with FA?**

A: No. FA is a progressive disease, which means that the problems slowly get worse over time.

**Q: Can I catch Friedreich's Ataxia?**

A: No! It's not contagious.

**Q: Does Friedreich's Ataxia affect intelligence or mind?**

A: No. It does not affect one ability to understand things. So, it cannot be used as an excuse not to have homework done. 😊

**Q: Is there a cure for Friedreich's Ataxia?**

A: Not currently. However, there is a lot of promising research and we are very hopeful that there will be a treatment soon.

**Q: What should I do now that I know someone with FA?**

A: You should treat him the same way that you treat everyone else: with kindness. If he/she stumbles or loses their balance, please be patient. You might offer to carry their school bag. Otherwise, they are the same kid that they always have been, so you can treat him/her the same way that you always have.

For more details on Rare Neurological Disease network please see [ern-rnd.eu](http://ern-rnd.eu). This information was compiled by Dr Mary Kearney, patient advocate, reviewed by Prof Sylvia Boesch, Innsbruck, Austria, Dr Isabella Moroni, Milan, Italy and Dr Lucie Stovickova, who are all members of the European Reference Network for Rare Neurological Diseases - Project ID No. 739510