



Thanatophoric dysplasia

Thanatophoric dysplasia is a severe skeletal disorder characterized by extremely short limbs and folds of extra (redundant) skin on the arms and legs. Other features of this condition include a narrow chest, short ribs, underdeveloped lungs, and an enlarged head with a large forehead and prominent, wide-spaced eyes.

Researchers have described two major forms of thanatophoric dysplasia, type I and type II. Type I thanatophoric dysplasia is distinguished by the presence of curved thigh bones and flattened bones of the spine (platyspondyly). Type II thanatophoric dysplasia is characterized by straight thigh bones and a moderate to severe skull abnormality called a cloverleaf skull.

The term thanatophoric is Greek for "death bearing." Infants with thanatophoric dysplasia are usually stillborn or die shortly after birth from respiratory failure; however, a few affected individuals have survived into childhood with extensive medical help.

Frequency

This condition occurs in 1 in 20,000 to 50,000 newborns. Type I thanatophoric dysplasia is more common than type II.

Causes

Mutations in the *FGFR3* gene cause thanatophoric dysplasia. Both types of this condition result from mutations in the *FGFR3* gene. This gene provides instructions for making a protein that is involved in the development and maintenance of bone and brain tissue. Mutations in this gene cause the FGFR3 protein to be overly active, which leads to the severe disturbances in bone growth that are characteristic of thanatophoric dysplasia. It is not known how *FGFR3* mutations cause the brain and skin abnormalities associated with this disorder.

Inheritance Pattern

Thanatophoric dysplasia is considered an autosomal dominant disorder because one mutated copy of the *FGFR3* gene in each cell is sufficient to cause the condition. Virtually all cases of thanatophoric dysplasia are caused by new mutations in the *FGFR3* gene and occur in people with no history of the disorder in their family. No affected individuals are known to have had children; therefore, the disorder has not been passed to the next generation.

Other Names for This Condition

- Dwarf, thanatophoric
- thanatophoric dwarfism
- thanatophoric short stature

Diagnosis & Management

Genetic Testing Information

- What is genetic testing?
[/primer/testing/genetictesting](#)
- Genetic Testing Registry: Thanatophoric dysplasia type 1
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/gtr/conditions/C1868678/>
- Genetic Testing Registry: Thanatophoric dysplasia, type 2
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/gtr/conditions/C1300257/>

Research Studies from ClinicalTrials.gov

- ClinicalTrials.gov
<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=%22thanatophoric+dysplasia%22>

Other Diagnosis and Management Resources

- GeneReview: Thanatophoric Dysplasia
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1366>

Additional Information & Resources

Health Information from MedlinePlus

- Health Topic: Craniofacial Abnormalities
<https://medlineplus.gov/craniofacialabnormalities.html>
- Health Topic: Dwarfism
<https://medlineplus.gov/dwarfism.html>
- Health Topic: Respiratory Failure
<https://medlineplus.gov/respiratoryfailure.html>

Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center

- Thanatophoric dysplasia
<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/85/thanatophoric-dysplasia>

Educational Resources

- MalaCards: thanatophoric dysplasia, type i
http://www.malacards.org/card/thanatophoric_dysplasia_type_i
- MalaCards: thanatophoric dysplasia, type ii
http://www.malacards.org/card/thanatophoric_dysplasia_type_ii
- Orphanet: Thanatophoric dysplasia
https://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/OC_Exp.php?Lng=EN&Expert=2655

Patient Support and Advocacy Resources

- International Skeletal Dysplasia Registry, UCLA
<http://ortho.ucla.edu/isdr>
- Little People of America, Inc.
<http://www.lpaonline.org>
- Little People UK
<http://littlepeopleuk.org/>
- Resource list from the University of Kansas Medical Center
<http://www.kumc.edu/gec/support/skeldysp.html>
- The MAGIC Foundation
<https://www.magicfoundation.org/>

Clinical Information from GeneReviews

- Thanatophoric Dysplasia
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1366>

Scientific Articles on PubMed

- PubMed
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%28Thanatophoric+Dysplasia%5BMAJR%5D%29+AND+%28thanatophoric+dysplasia%5BTIAB%5D%29+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+human%5Bmh%5D+AND+%22last+1800+days%22%5Bdp%5D>

Catalog of Genes and Diseases from OMIM

- THANATOPHORIC DYSPLASIA, TYPE I
<http://omim.org/entry/187600>
- THANATOPHORIC DYSPLASIA, TYPE II
<http://omim.org/entry/187601>

Sources for This Summary

- Cohen MM Jr. Some chondrodysplasias with short limbs: molecular perspectives. *Am J Med Genet.* 2002 Oct 15;112(3):304-13. Review.
Citation on PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12357475>
- Foldynova-Trantirkova S, Wilcox WR, Krejci P. Sixteen years and counting: the current understanding of fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (FGFR3) signaling in skeletal dysplasias. *Hum Mutat.* 2012 Jan;33(1):29-41. doi: 10.1002/humu.21636. Epub 2011 Nov 16. Review.
Citation on PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22045636>
Free article on PubMed Central: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3240715/>
- Karczeski B, Cutting GR. Thanatophoric Dysplasia. 2004 May 21 [updated 2013 Sep 12]. In: Pagon RA, Adam MP, Ardinger HH, Wallace SE, Amemiya A, Bean LJH, Bird TD, Ledbetter N, Mefford HC, Smith RJH, Stephens K, editors. *GeneReviews®* [Internet]. Seattle (WA): University of Washington, Seattle; 1993-2017. Available from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1366/>
Citation on PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20301540>
- Martínez-Frías ML, de Frutos CA, Bermejo E, Nieto MA; ECEMC Working Group. Review of the recently defined molecular mechanisms underlying thanatophoric dysplasia and their potential therapeutic implications for achondroplasia. *Am J Med Genet A.* 2010 Jan;152A(1):245-55. doi: 10.1002/ajmg.a.33188. Review.
Citation on PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20034074>
- Pannier S, Martinovic J, Heuertz S, Delezoide AL, Munnich A, Schibler L, Serre V, Legeai-Mallet L. Thanatophoric dysplasia caused by double missense FGFR3 mutations. *Am J Med Genet A.* 2009 Jun;149A(6):1296-301. doi: 10.1002/ajmg.a.32880.
Citation on PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19449430>
- Vajo Z, Francomano CA, Wilkin DJ. The molecular and genetic basis of fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 disorders: the achondroplasia family of skeletal dysplasias, Muenke craniosynostosis, and Crouzon syndrome with acanthosis nigricans. *Endocr Rev.* 2000 Feb;21(1):23-39. Review.
Citation on PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10696568>
- Waller DK, Correa A, Vo TM, Wang Y, Hobbs C, Langlois PH, Pearson K, Romitti PA, Shaw GM, Hecht JT. The population-based prevalence of achondroplasia and thanatophoric dysplasia in selected regions of the US. *Am J Med Genet A.* 2008 Sep 15;146A(18):2385-9. doi: 10.1002/ajmg.a.32485.
Citation on PubMed: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18698630>

Reprinted from Genetics Home Reference:

<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/thanatophoric-dysplasia>

Reviewed: October 2012

Published: August 14, 2018

Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications
U.S. National Library of Medicine
National Institutes of Health
Department of Health & Human Services