Juvenile Myoclonic Epilepsy (JME)

JME is a fairly common epilepsy syndrome that usually begins between the ages of 12 to 18 years. Seizure symptoms include myoclonic jerking of the shoulders, arms and sometimes legs. Absence seizures may also be present. Seizures usually occur early in the morning or within a couple of hours of awakening. In many cases, and after a number of years, the young person will start to experience generalised tonic-clonic seizures. JME has a strong genetic component, with up to half of all affected children having a family history of seizures or epilepsy.

Seizures can be triggered by early awakening, lack of sleep, alcohol, drugs, fasting, menstruation or flickering lights (photosensitive epilepsy). Because of this it is particularly important for adolescents living with JME to adopt regular lifestyle habits and choices and follow their treatment plan carefully.

People living with JME will usually require lifelong treatment with AEDs, and generally have a good prognosis.

For more information about JME visit the Epilepsy Foundation USA