Tardive dyskinesia is an involuntary movement disorder that is associated with taking certain medications (antipsychotics) to treat bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia, or schizoaffective disorder.\(^1\)\(^-\)\(^3\) TD is characterized by uncontrollable, abnormal, and repetitive movements of the face, torso, and/or other body parts.\(^4\)

Even though TD can look or feel different from day to day, TD is a real, chronic condition and symptoms may be persistent.\(^3\) Imagine a patient who is struggling to control their mental health and then is faced with uncontrollable movements, including:\(^1\)\(^,\)\(^4\)

- Lip puckering or smacking
- Tongue darting, sticking out, or pushing inside of cheek
- Excessive blinking or squinting again and again
- Jaw biting, clenching, or side-to-side movements
- Twisting hands or dancing fingers
- Rocking, leaning back, or torso and hip shifting
- Gripping feet or stretched toes

These involuntary movements associated with TD can impact patients socially, physically, and emotionally,\(^6\) making them feel embarrassed or judged by others and, in some cases, lead them to withdraw from society and isolate themselves from the outside world.\(^1\)\(^,\)\(^6\)\(^-\)\(^8\)

Despite the number of people impacted by the condition, many people are still unfamiliar with TD. However, for patients living with TD, their families, and their caregivers, it is important to know that they are not alone.

In an effort to raise awareness of TD, states are being asked to declare Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week during the first full week of May 1-7, 2022.

May is also Mental Health Awareness Month, and as we work to increase awareness and support for those impacted by mental health conditions, it is important to remember that those living with a mental illness and taking antipsychotics for a prolonged time may develop or already have TD.

Over the past 4 years, and entering the 5th anniversary, 48 states, Washington, DC, and a broad coalition of mental health advocacy organizations recognized the first week of May as Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week.

Learn more about TD, living with TD, and how to treat TD by visiting TalkAboutTD.com.

References: