The most common postural tremor in children is called an **Essential Tremor**, or **Benign Tremor**. It may occur at any age, but it is more common in the second and sixth decades of life. About half of patients with essential tremor have a family history of this type of tremor. Fortunately, an Essential Tremor is treatable and seldom a sign of a serious illness.

**Causes**

- Birth defects (metabolic diseases)
- Cocaine or alcohol exposure during the pregnancy
- Cerebral Palsy
- Traumatic Brain Injuries
- Cerebellar disease
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Thyroid Disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Alcoholism
- Wilson's Disease
- Huntington's Corea

**Can a tremor be normal?**

Everyone has a normal or physiologic tremor. A physiologic tremor is very mild and often cannot be detected except by a doctor. Anxiety, caffeine, fatigue, or medications may worsen a physiologic tremor. The tremor may worsen when you engage in mental tasks (like studying or playing video games) or if you move another part of the body, such as clenching a fist or tapping a foot.
**Provokers**

Things that can worsen tremor include:
- Stress, anxiety, or anger
- Fatigue or not getting enough sleep
- Cold medicines like Actifed or Sudafed
- Allergy medicines like Allegra
- Asthma medicines like Proventil
- SSRI medicines like Prozac or Zoloft
- Neuroleptics like Risperdal, or Haldol
- Other medicines like Tegretol, Depakote, Tofranil, Pamelor, Ritalin or Adderall
- Foods like caffeine or chocolate
- Low blood sugar from skipping meals

**School Help**

For school children, an IEP (Individual Education Plan) can be written. This may include:
- Decrease the amount of written work.
- Use multiple choice or circle the answer questions.
- Do not grade them on their penmanship.
- Use xeroxed books or notes.
- Use a tape recorder to take notes.
- Allow oral rather than written reports.
- Have them dictate their reports to a "secretary" (a parent or a friend) who can write down their thoughts for them.
- An Occupational Therapist helps develop strategies for writing, eating, or dressing.

**Medications**

Before treating a tremor, a thorough evaluation including a history and a physical exam is done. Thyroid tests, MRI, EMG, or an ophthalmology consultation may be requested. Medication should be used only when a tremor interferes with a patient's ability to function. If a medication is causing the tremor, the best treatment is to change or stop that medicine if possible. A common side effect with medications used to treat tremor is drowsiness. Treatments include:

- **Inderal** (propranolol), a blood pressure medicine, and **Mysoline** (primidone) are the medications of choice.
- **Baclofen** and **Zanaflex** are muscle relaxants.
- **Neurontin** is a seizure medicine.
- **Klonopin** is used for postural tremors.
- **Artane** or **Cogentin** can help especially if the tremor is caused by medication.
- **Diamox**, a diuretic, has helped some.
- **Botox** is an injected medicine that has been used with good results.
- **Brain surgery** has helped many patients with severe tremor.

**Check it out**

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