

How to Qualify for Disability Benefits with Friedreich's Ataxia

[Friedreich's Ataxia \(FA\)](#) is a debilitating and degenerative neuro-muscular disorder that shortens the lifespan of the individual. Most individuals experience the onset of the symptoms between the ages of 5 and 18. Experiencing late onset is very uncommon and occurs in less than 25% of those who are diagnosed. Rarely it can occur in adulthood. If you experience FA and you will not be able to work and earn a living, you may be eligible for [Social Security Disability benefits](#).

Medically Qualifying for Disability Benefits

FA is on the list of compassionate allowance conditions. These are conditions that are severe or terminal that automatically qualify for disability. To have your claim approved, you will need to provide hard medical evidence to [support your claim](#). You will need to show that you have a confirmed diagnosis and how the condition affects you. You must provide results from diagnostic testing, such as nerve conduction studies, electrocardiogram, electromyogram, blood tests, urinalysis, Holter monitor, MRI reports, and so forth.

Genetic testing can confirm the *FXN* gene abnormality that causes the condition. Confirmed documentation with signed reports by your physician are a necessity.

Gathering the Necessary Evidence

Be sure to prepare a detailed list of your medical providers, the approximate dates of service, and their contact details. You will need to have thorough evidence to support your claim and to confirm you do have a diagnosis of FA. You will also need to provide your proof of identity, such as your birth certificate, your Social Security card, and your driver's license or state identification card. Your medical records should show some of the following symptoms –

- Ataxia (lack of voluntary coordination of muscle movements);
- Foot deformities, such as clubfoot, flexion (involuntary bending) of the toes, hammer toes, or foot inversion (turning in);
- Nystagmus (rapid, rhythmic, involuntary movements of the eyeball);
- Scoliosis (a curving of the spine to one side);
- Chest pain;
- Shortness of breath; and
- Heart palpitations

Although [FA is a compassionate allowance](#), you must prove that you do have the condition by providing the supporting evidence and documentation to confirm it.

Applying for Disability Benefits

If you suffer from FA and are unable to work, you will want to start your application for disability benefits from the SSA. You should gather all the supporting evidence including medical documentation. You can [start the claim form online](#) or by calling 1-800-772-1213 and speaking with a representative.

Resources linked above:

- <https://curefa.org/whatis>
- <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/>
- <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/compassionate-allowance-claim>
- <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/compassionate-allowances/friedreichs-ataxia-social-security-disability>
- <https://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/>