

Table 1**Key elements of diagnosis**

Pattern of weakness	History	Clinical examination
Ocular	Diplopia Drooping eyelids	Ophthalmoplegia (check full eye movements) Ptosis (can be unilateral) Look for fatiguability on sustained upgaze Look at old photographs
Bulbar	Inability to smile Difficulty chewing Drooling/nasal regurgitation/ choking episodes	Examine forced eyelid and mouth closure Listen for dysarthria/nasal speech after prolonged speech e.g. at end of consultation/counting to 50
Axial	Head drop Neck pain	Check strength of neck flexion and extension
Limb	Difficulty lifting objects/going up stairs	Examine proximal power before and after repetitive movements, e.g. unilateral shoulder abduction 20 times
Respiratory	Exertional dyspnoea Orthopnoea	Measure forced vital capacity