

Peripheral neuropathy





Also called: peripheral neuritis



Weakness, numbness, and pain from nerve damage, usually in the hands and feet.

Very common

More than 3 million US cases per year

-  Can't be cured, but treatment may help
-  Requires a medical diagnosis
-  Lab tests or imaging often required
-  Chronic: can last for years or be lifelong

A common cause of peripheral neuropathy is diabetes, but it can also result from injuries, infections, and exposure to toxins.

Symptoms include pain, a pins-and-needles sensation, numbness, and weakness.

Treatment focuses on medications to relieve uncomfortable symptoms and management of the underlying condition.

Ages affected



Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

Symptoms include pain, a pins-and-needles sensation, numbness, and weakness.

Can have no symptoms, but people may experience:

Pain: can occur at night, in the back, face, foot, hands, or thigh, can be burning and tingling or sharp

Sensory: numbness, over sensitivity, pins and needles, sensitivity to pain, or uncomfortable tingling and burning

Muscular: difficulty walking, muscle weakness, problems with coordination, or loss of muscle

Whole body: poor balance or weakness

Also common: apprehension, blister, burning sensation, callus, cramping, slow reflexes, tingling feet, or tingling fingers

Treatments

Can't be cured, but treatment may help

Treatment focuses on medications to relieve uncomfortable symptoms and management of the underlying condition.

Prescription

Pain reliever: Oxycodone (Oxycontin), Tramadol (Ultram)

Other treatments: Amitriptyline, Nortriptyline (Pamelor), Pregabalin (Lyrica), Duloxetine (Cymbalta), Gabapentin (Neurontin), Carbamazepine (Tegretol), Phenytoin

Self-treatment

Lidocaine to the affected area (Anecream), Capsaicin to the affected area (Capsagel)

Specialists

Primary care provider (PCP): Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.

Diabetologist: Treats patients with diabetes mellitus.

Podiatrist: Treats disorders of the foot, ankle, and lower extremities.

Physical medicine and rehabilitation: Restores function and quality of life to those with physical disabilities.

Physical therapist: Restores muscle strength and function through exercise.

Neurologist: Treats nervous system disorders.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.