

FAST FACTS: Neuropathic Pain

Neuropathic pain is a result of damage in the nervous system. This can be a disturbance in the function of one or more nerves and is often associated with damage to major organs. The pain is often described as burning, numbness, tingling, electric shock-like, and possibly deep aching.



✓ **Diabetic Neuropathy**

- Injury to nerve fibers from high blood sugar, most often in hands and feet
- Signs/Symptoms: numbness and tingling
- Management: control blood sugar

✓ **Post-herpetic Neuralgia**

- Complication of shingles and is a burning pain that lasts long after the rash and blisters disappear
- Signs/Symptoms: burning at shingles site, sensitivity to touch, muscle weakness
- Treatment: prescription medications

✓ **Multiple Sclerosis**

- Autoimmune disease of unknown cause; destroys the protective sheath on nerves
- Signs/Symptoms: painful muscle spasms, numbness, weakness of limb on one side, unsteady walking, blurriness, loss of vision, tingling/electric-shock sensations
- Treatment: prescription and over the counter medications, massage, muscle relaxants for muscle spasms

✓ **Spinal Cord Injuries / Muscular Weakness Affecting Only One Side of Body**

- Causes: trauma, arthritis, cancer, inflammation/infection, degeneration, strokes
- Signs/Symptoms: loss of sensation/movement or bowel/bladder control, pain, exaggerated reflex
- Treatment: medications; non-drug treatments may include TENS units and massage

✓ **Peripheral Neuropathy**

- Definition: damage to nerves outside brain or central nervous system
- Causes: trauma and infections; toxins such as alcohol or poisons; diseases such as lupus, Guillain-Barre, Lyme; vitamin B deficiency; hypothyroid or kidney disease
- Signs/Symptoms: numbness & tingling in hands, feet, and many other sites
- Treatment: medications; non-drug treatments may include TENS units and massage

✓ **What Else You Should Do**

- Write down and share information about your loved one's pain with their healthcare provider
- Use a [Pain Diary](#) to note important information useful to the healthcare provider
- Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary

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References

WebMD. August 23, 2021. *Neuropathic Pain Management*. <https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/neuropathic-pain>.

Cleveland Clinic. December 7, 2020. *Neuropathic Pain*. <https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/neuropathic-pain>.