

FAST FACTS: Neuropathic Pain

Neuropathic pain arises from actual or threatened damage to tissues due to the activation or damage in the nervous system. This can be a disturbance in the function of one or more nerves and is often associated with end organ damage. 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 sugars, most often in hands and feet
 - Signs/Symptoms: numbness and tingling
 - Management: control blood sugar
- ✓ **Post herpetic Neuralgia (Complication of Shingles)**
 - Complication of Shingles that last longer than a few weeks, increased risk with age
 - Signs/Symptoms: burning at shingles site, sensitivity to touch, muscle weakness
 - Treatment: Lidocaine patches, Tricyclic anti-depressants, Anticonvulsants, Opioids, Capsaicin
- ✓ **Multiple Sclerosis**
 - Autoimmune disease destroys protective sheath on nerves, cause unknown
 - Woman between 20-40 higher risk
 - Signs/Symptoms: painful muscle spasms, numbness, weakness of limb on one side, unsteady gait, blurriness, loss of vision, tingling/electric-shock sensations
 - Treatment: same as other conditions for pain, muscle relaxants for muscle spasms
- ✓ **Spinal Cord Injuries, Hemiparesis**
 - Causes: trauma, arthritis, cancer, inflammation/infection, degeneration, strokes
 - Signs/Symptoms: loss sensation/movement or bowel/bladder control, pain, exaggerated reflex
 - Treatment: same as post herpetic neuralgia; TENS units, massage

✓ **Peripheral Neuropathy**

- Causes: trauma & infections; toxins such as alcohol or poisons; Diseases- Lupus, Guillain-Barre, Lyme; vitamin B deficiency; hypothyroid or kidney disease
- Signs/Symptoms: numbness & tingling in hands, feet, and many other sites
- Treatment: same as post herpetic neuralgia; TENS units, massage

✓ **What else you should do**

- Contact health care provider for assessment of condition
- Consider using a [Pain Diary](#) to share information with your healthcare provider
- Try a non-drug treatment to assist with pain