



AdvaCare Clinics
Advanced Healthcare Solutions

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AdvaCare Clinics: Neuropathy Symptom Relief

Neuropathic pain is a complex, mysterious malady. In some cases, the cause of neuropathic pain is not completely understood, though often it can be traced back to disease or to specific types of nerve damage.

Neuropathy (also known as peripheral neuropathy, sensory peripheral neuropathy, or peripheral neuritis) is a painful condition that usually results from major or irreversible damage to the nerves. This damage can be from disease, injury, or a tumor. In the United States, diabetes is the leading cause of neuropathy. Most people with neuropathy experience periodic or constant muscle weakness, numbness, and tingling. Many also experience severe burning or electric-like shooting pain.

The peripheral nerves — motor, sensory and autonomic — connect your muscles, skin and internal organs to the spinal cord and brain. The smallest nerves are affected the most, and these are the ones furthest from the brain and blood supply. So the tips of the fingers and toes are first and usually the worse, but then the hands and feet are touched. When it affects the arms, hands, legs and feet it is known as diabetic peripheral neuropathy. In fact, about 50% of people with diabetes develop some type of neuropathy.

Many people whose feet are affected by diabetic neuropathy are also dealing with circulatory/microvascular problems. Their ability to heal from otherwise minor cuts and scrapes is often seriously impaired, leading to a history of ulceration or even a partial amputation. This can seriously interfere with a diabetic's self-care, especially care of the feet. Circulatory problems from diabetes can lead to dry skin on the feet with the risk of ulcers and lesions. Lacking normal pain reflexes, the diabetic with neuropathy may not be aware his or her feet are in trouble. Even stepping on a tack may be pain free. This means otherwise treatable lesions go unnoticed and allowed to progress into severe infection, sometimes into gangrene itself. Amputation is a common result, and complications of diabetes account for the majority of nontraumatic amputations in the U.S. today.

Individual symptoms are as varied as individuals, but the most common complaint in the early stages is pain, and pain control becomes the single biggest challenge in dealing with established neuropathy. Once neuropathic pain is well established, it tends to become more difficult to successfully manage and more aggressive treatments may be required.

Because of the complex nature of neuropathic pain, no one therapy is completely successful. A multi-disciplinary, integrated approach to managing the pain is often useful.

To learn more about treatment options, contact AdvaCare Clinic today at 952-835-6653!

