



What is the Peripheral Nervous System?

The body's nervous system is made up of two parts. The central nervous system, which includes the brain and spinal cord, and the peripheral nervous system, which connects the nerves running from the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body (arms and hands, legs and feet, internal organs, joints, and even the face and skin).

Peripheral neuropathy occurs when nerves are damaged or destroyed.

- Central Nervous System
- Peripheral Nervous System

PREPARING FOR YOUR DOCTOR'S VISIT

✓ Write down any symptoms you are experiencing (even if you think they are unrelated)

✓ If you experience pain, keep a log of when it occurs and its intensity

✓ Make a list of all your medications, vitamins and supplements

✓ Write down your own questions in advance and bring them with you



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UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY



the FOUNDATION *for*
PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY®

DEDICATED to REVERSING *the* IRREVERSIBLE

What Causes Peripheral Neuropathy?

Peripheral neuropathy is the manifestation of different conditions that can damage the peripheral nerves and is considered a neurological disorder rather than one distinct disease. Peripheral neuropathy may be either acquired or inherited.

Acquired PN

- Systemic diseases including diabetes mellitus, kidney disorders, and vitamin deficiencies
- Some drugs including chemotherapy and certain medications for HIV
- Autoimmune diseases including Guillain-Barré Syndrome, and Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy
- Exposure to toxic chemicals
- Alcoholism

Inherited PN

The most common inherited neuropathies are a group of genetic disorders referred to as Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT) disease. Symptoms of CMT depend on which form is inherited.

In some cases, however, even with extensive evaluation, the causes of peripheral neuropathy remain unknown—this is called idiopathic neuropathy.

3 types of Peripheral Nerves and the Associated Neuropathy Symptoms



MOTOR

Motor nerves send impulses from the brain and spinal cord to all muscles in the body. Motor nerve damage can lead to muscle weakness, difficulty walking or moving the arms, cramps and spasms.



SENSORY

Sensory nerves send messages in the other direction—from the periphery back to the spinal cord and the brain. Sensory nerve damage often results in tingling, numbness, pain, and sensitivity to touch.



AUTONOMIC

Autonomic nerves control involuntary or semi-voluntary functions, such as heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, and sweating. Autonomic nerve damage may result in difficulty swallowing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation, problems with urination, abnormal pupil size, and sexual dysfunction.

Treatments

There are many options available for treating peripheral neuropathy. The most effective ones address the underlying cause. Most often, the focus of treatment is on symptom control.

Some people are helped by:

- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Well-balanced diet
- Avoiding exposure to toxins
- Exercise
- Vitamin supplements
- Limiting or avoiding alcohol
- Prescription drugs
- Complementary and integrative therapies

Coping Skills

Living with chronic pain or disability presents daily challenges. Below are a couple of suggestions that may make it easier for you to cope:

- Engage with other patients in the PN community through patient conferences and support groups
- Work with a counselor or physical/occupational therapist to construct a personalized daily routine

DID YOU KNOW?
AN ESTIMATED
30 million Americans
SUFFER FROM SOME FORM OF PN

For detailed information on causes, treatment options, lifestyle modifications, and coping skills, please visit: www.foundationforpn.org

