

Diabetic nerve pain center

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What is diabetic nerve pain?

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy (nerve disease) is a common complication in people with diabetes.¹ It can result in persistent nerve pain that usually affects the feet and legs first, followed by the hands in a "stocking and glove" pattern.¹ Your risk of developing painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy or diabetic nerve pain increases with age and the longer you have had diabetes.²

The underlying cause of diabetic peripheral neuropathy remains unclear.³ However, there are studies that suggest controlling blood glucose levels alone is not enough to prevent, stop, or reverse damaged nerve function.³

Factors that are likely to cause nerve damage in diabetic peripheral neuropathy include:²



High blood glucose levels



Long duration of diabetes



Smoking



Alcohol use



Abnormal blood Fat levels



Inherited susceptibility

If you have diabetes and are experiencing ongoing pain, it is important to describe your symptoms to your doctor.

How common is diabetic nerve pain?

If you have diabetes and experience ongoing pain, you are not alone. Your doctor will be familiar with the types of pain associated with diabetes.

Talk to your doctor about which treatment options may be the most appropriate for you.



Diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN) affects up to **70%** of people with diabetes worldwide.³



Approximately **1 in 4** people with diabetes suffer from diabetic nerve pain.⁴



It is estimated that **80%** of people with diabetic nerve pain suffer from moderate to severe pain.⁵

What does diabetic nerve pain feel like?

Some people with diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN) experience nerve pain, whilst others do not.⁵ Painful DPN develops slowly, beginning at the feet and legs first, followed by the hands.¹

Painful DPN is often described as tingling, pins and needles, burning, freezing, stabbing, shooting, or electric shocks. This pain gets worse at night.¹



Electric shocks



Shooting/
stabbing



Burning/
on fire



Tingling/
pins &
needles



Freezing

Painful areas may become abnormally sensitive if you have nerve pain. For example, sensations that would usually not cause pain, such as clothes brushing against your skin or a cold draught of air, can be intensely painful experiences.⁶

Don't ignore your pain



Diabetic nerve pain can largely affect your quality of life. In addition to pain, a delay in treatment or misdiagnosis of your diabetic nerve pain may lead to the development of other conditions including:¹



Foot ulceration



Progressive muscle
weakness



Depression



Sleep disorders

Untreated diabetic peripheral neuropathy can worsen over time and lead to permanent nerve damage.⁷

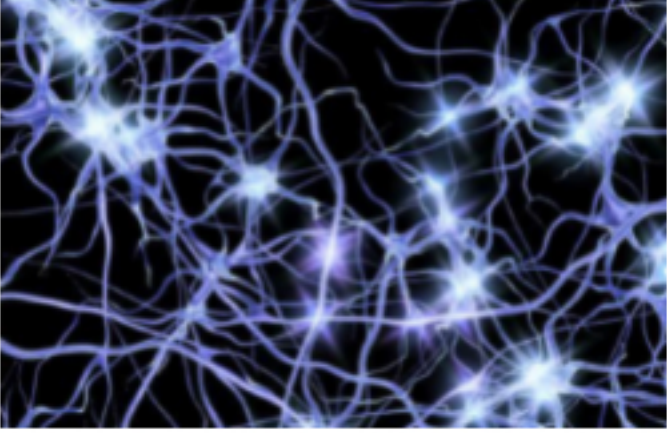
There are specific treatments available for diabetic nerve pain. **If you think you have diabetic nerve pain, make an appointment to see your doctor.**

If you have pain that won't go away, it's important to get help.



If you have diabetes, it is important to make sure that you manage your condition. Make sure your diabetes is monitored by your doctor and/or specialist(s), and keep your blood glucose levels under control. If your diabetes is not well managed, you run the risk of developing complications including diabetic nerve pain. Talk to your doctor about your diabetes if you are struggling to manage your condition.

How does diabetic nerve pain differ from other pain?



Nerve pain experienced in diabetic peripheral neuropathy differs from other types of pain since the nervous system is directly affected.⁸

Usually, pain is the way our nervous system tells us that there is damage to a part of our body. This is called "nociceptive" pain. Unlike nociceptive pain, nerve pain arises as a result of disease or damage to the nerve itself. Nerve pain is also referred to as "neuropathic" pain. Both nociceptive and neuropathic pain can be present at the same time, which is known as mixed pain.⁸

People with nerve pain may experience symptoms of stabbing, shooting or electric shocks.¹ These are signs of nerve damage and are unlikely to occur with other types of pain.⁸

Know someone with diabetic nerve pain?



Perhaps you know someone with symptoms that sound like diabetic nerve pain? If so, there are practical steps you can take to help someone experiencing ongoing pain.

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