

Causes of Diabetic Neuropathy

Prolonged exposure to high blood sugar can damage nerve fibres and cause diabetic neuropathy. High blood sugar interferes with the ability of nerves to transmit signals. It also weakens the walls of the small blood vessels responsible for supplying the nerves with oxygen and nutrients, eventually causing damage to the nerves and blood vessels.

Tests and Diagnosis

Diagnoses are made on the basis of your symptoms, medical history and a physical examination. During the examination, your doctor will check your muscle strength and tone, tendon reflexes as well as sensitivity to touch, temperature and vibration. Other tests may include Nerve Conduction Studies (NCT) and Electromyography (EMG).

Treatments and Medications

There is yet no cure for diabetic neuropathy. Treatment of diabetic peripheral neuropathy focuses on:

- Monitoring the blood sugar level to slow down the progression of the disease
- Relieving pain
- Managing complications and restoring function

If you experience any of the following symptoms, please consult our doctors as soon as possible:

- Pain and numbness in your hands or feet that interferes with your daily routines or sleep
- Muscular atrophy
- Postural hypotension and dizziness
- Changes in digestion, urination or sexual function

Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

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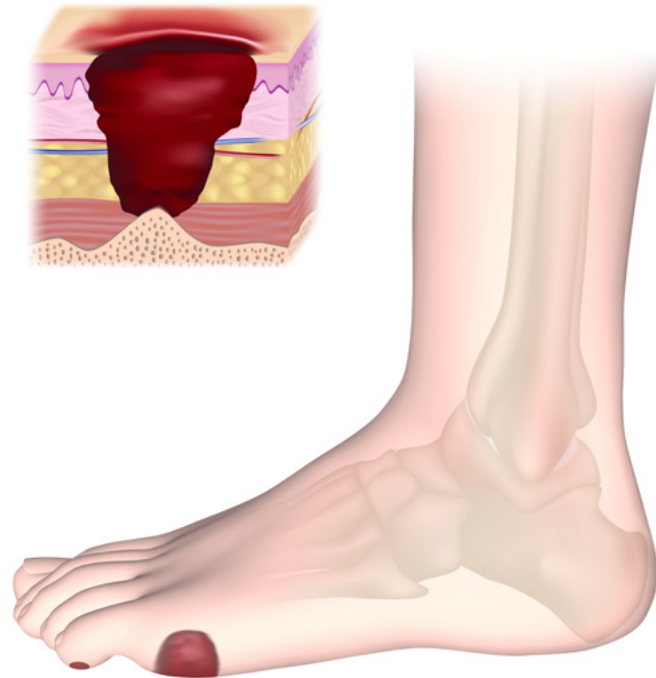
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Service Hours

Monday to Friday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays
Consultation by Appointment



Diabetic Neuropathy



For enquiries and appointments,
please contact us

What is Diabetic Neuropathy?

Diabetic neuropathy is a common severe complication of diabetes. High blood sugar may cause damage to the nerve fibres throughout your body. The most common symptoms of diabetic neuropathy include:

- Pain and numbness in the limbs
- Neurological changes in the digestive system, urinary system, blood vessels and heart

Symptoms

Most of the symptoms of diabetic neuropathy develop gradually, and you may not notice any problem until it is too late. The symptoms and signs of diabetic neuropathy vary, depending on the type of affected nerves.

1. Peripheral Neuropathy

Your legs and feet may first suffer, followed by your hands and arms. Symptoms and signs of peripheral neuropathy may include:

- Numbness or reduced sensitivity to pain
- A tingling or burning sensation, which worsens at night
- Pain while walking
- Heightened skin sensitivity of skin, i.e. even the touch of a bed sheet can be excruciating
- Muscle weakness, difficulty in walking
- Serious foot problems, such as ulcers, bone and joint pain



2. Autonomic Neuropathy

The autonomic nervous system controls your heart, bladder, stomach, intestines, genitals and eyes. Diabetic autonomic neuropathy may cause:

- A lack of awareness of low blood sugar level
- Bladder problems, including frequent urinary tract infections or incontinence
- Constipation, uncontrolled diarrhoea or both; slow stomach emptying may lead to nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite and difficulty in swallowing
- Erectile dysfunction in men
- Increased or decreased sweating
- An inability to adjust blood pressure or heart rate, leading to sharp drops in blood pressure after switching postures, causing lightheadedness or even fainting

3. Radiculoplexus Neuropathy (Diabetic Amyotrophy)

Also called diabetic amyotrophy, this condition is more common in patients with Type 2 Diabetes and the elderly. Common symptoms include:

- Sudden and severe pain in the hip or thigh
- Weak and atrophied thigh muscles
- Difficulty rising from a sitting position
- Weight loss

4. Mononeuropathy

Mononeuropathy may affect nerves on the face, torso or leg. Symptoms may include:

- Difficulty in focusing the eyes, double vision or aching behind the eye
- Paralysis on one side of the face
- Pain in the shin or foot
- Pain in the anterior of the thigh
- Pain in the chest or abdomen

5. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common compressive neuropathy in patients with diabetes. Symptoms and signs include:

- Tingling or numbness in the fingers or palm, particularly the thumb, index finger, middle finger or ring finger
- Weakness in the fingers or palm, leading to objects dropping from hands

