

ABOUT NEUROPATHY

Neuropathy (also known as peripheral neuropathy, sensory peripheral neuropathy or peripheral neuritis) is a condition related to damaged peripheral nerves. Peripheral nerves branch out from the spinal cord and connect the brain to all parts of the body.

These nerves are fragile and can become damaged by problems such as diabetes, infections, autoimmune diseases, alcoholism and exposure to toxic solvents. Pressure on a nerve can also cause what is known as compressive neuropathy such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

Recognizing the Symptoms

Regardless of the cause of neuropathy, the symptoms are universal.

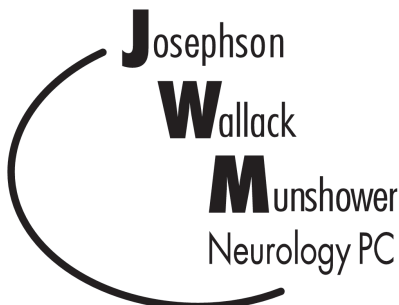
- Neuropathy typically begins with tingling in the toes or fingers, and the tingling gradually spreads to the feet or hands.
- The tingling can then turn into a burning type of pain.
- These sensations can be constant or periodic.
- Some types of neuropathy affect the motor nerves and may result in muscle weakness.

Diagnosing the Symptoms

Physicians diagnose neuropathy by performing a complete medical history and a neurological examination.

- Blood work-up and other tests may also be done in order to assess the functionality of the liver, kidneys and thyroid.

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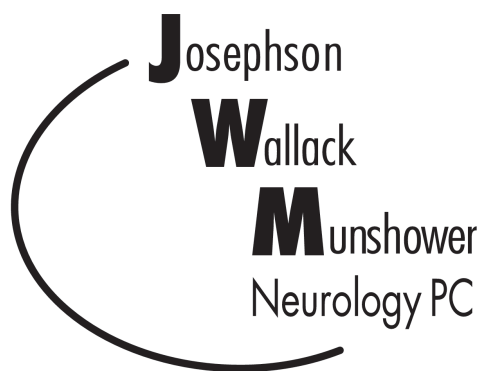
Diagnosing the Symptoms (continued)

- An EMG (electromyography) and nerve conduction tests may also be performed. These tests measure and study different actions of the muscles and nerves and can detect the cause of muscle weakness, numbness, spasms, paralysis or pain.
- They can also determine if a problem involves nerves, muscles, the spinal cord or the brain.

Treating Neuropathy

Treatment for neuropathy depends upon the cause.

- If it is due to medication, your physician may change a particular medicine you are taking.
- Many times, it is not clear what is causing the symptoms, therefore, your physician may choose to alleviate the pain and tingling with various types of medication, physical therapy or an alteration in diet.
- If an illness is the cause, other treatment options may be explored.



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