



“NEUROPATHIC PAIN IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO DIAGNOSE, HOWEVER IF A PATIENT CAN DESCRIBE THEIR PAIN, REGARDLESS OF HOW UNUSUAL THEY THINK IT MAY SOUND, IT CAN BE VERY USEFUL. THIS OFTEN HELPS WITH THE DIAGNOSIS AND HELPS TO SPEED UP THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CONDITION.”

Dr Chris Barker, GP

Further information and support



Action on Pain

PainLine: 0845 6031593 (Lo-call rate)
www.action-on-pain.co.uk



BackCare

Helpline: 0845 130 2704
www.backcare.org.uk



The Neuropathy Trust

Peripheral Neuropathy and
Neuropathic Pain Information
and Support: 01270 611 828
www.neurocentre.com
(SLANSS Pain Scale available online)



Shingles Support Society

(part of the Herpes Viruses Association)
Helpline: 0845 123 2305
www.herpess.org.uk/shingles



Facing pain together

Trigeminal Neuralgia Association UK

PO Box 413
Bromley
BR2 9XS
Switchboard: 020 8462 9122
www.tna.org.uk



Spinal Injuries Association

Advice line: 0800 980 0501
www.spinal.co.uk

Diabetes UK

Careline: 0845 120 2960
(or if hearing impaired: 020 7424 1031)
Switchboard: 020 7424 1000
Email: info@diabetes.org.uk
www.diabetes.org.uk

Provided by



DO YOU OFTEN GET PAIN LIKE THIS?

You could be suffering
from neuropathic pain.

What is neuropathic pain and who does it affect?

Neuropathic pain is a type of long term pain caused by damage to the nerves. It can affect anyone of any age, though it is more common in older people. It can affect the way you live your daily life.

WHAT ARE NERVES?

Nerves are the body's 'electrical wiring' system that carry messages back and forth, between the brain and the rest of the body.

What causes neuropathic pain?

There are a number of causes of neuropathic pain, for example:

- **Diabetes**
- **Cancer**
- **Shingles**
- **Trigeminal Neuralgia**
- **Multiple sclerosis**
- **Stroke**
- **Leg ulcers**
- **Back problems**
- **Injury from an accident**
- **Surgery, at the site of a surgical wound or scar**

NEUROPATHIC PAIN CAN AFFECT:

- Up to 8% of the general population
- 20–24% of people with diabetes
- 1 in 3 people with cancer
- Almost half of people over 50 years old who have suffered from shingles
- 26–58% of people after traumatic spinal cord injury

What are the symptoms?

Neuropathic pain often feels like:

- **Burning**
- **Shooting**
- **Stabbing**
- **Electric shock**
- **Itching**
- **Numbness**
- **'Creepy crawlies'**

Neuropathic pain can be felt anywhere in the body. For example, people with diabetes often get it in their feet and hands.

Another less common cause of neuropathic pain is something called Trigeminal Neuralgia which causes severe pain of the face.

Other symptoms that may be experienced along with the pain include:

- **Difficulty in sleeping**
- **Lack of energy**
- **Tiredness**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Oversensitive skin**



Getting help?

If you think you have neuropathic pain go and see your doctor. Before your visit, think about how you will describe the pain and how often the pain happens. A pain diary can help your doctor more than anything in finding out what is wrong. Useful questions to ask yourself are:

- How long have you had the pain overall?
- How often does it happen?
- Do you get it at certain times of the day?
- Do you get it with or after doing certain activities?
- Where do you feel it in your body?
- What does it feel like?
- Do you have one or various types of pain?

Don't be afraid to take someone with you to the doctor.

How is neuropathic pain treated?

There are various treatments for neuropathic pain depending on the cause. If you find that treatments you have bought or were given to you by your doctor do not work, tell your doctor.

Finding the right treatment for you may take time. It is a good idea to tell your doctor about treatments or therapies you have tried before, to help you and your doctor make decisions about your treatment going forward.

With the appropriate treatment you should feel better, however it is likely that your pain will not totally disappear.