

# Orthopaedic Connection

## Peripheral Neuropathy

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*Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

I have told you from time to time that Orthopaedic Surgeons need to know about lots more than bones. If I only knew about bones all I could treat would be skeletons and they don't need treatment. I have had a human skeleton in the office for a long time and he has never needed me!

### **Nerve Trouble**

I am not talking about nervousness or "nerves", but I am referring to the specific structures we call nerves.

The nervous system is divided into two parts.

- The Central Nervous System - Brain and Spinal Cord
- Peripheral Nerves - all other nerves. There are many, many types of peripheral nerves and I don't want to lose you.

### **Peripheral Neuropathy**

As you can guess, peripheral neuropathy affects nerves away from the brain and spinal cord. Most often it affects the longest nerves, those that reach your toes or hands.

These "outer nerves" allow feeling sensations such as pain, temperature and touch. Other peripheral nerves go to muscles, controlling muscle contractions and movement.

### **Symptoms Of Peripheral Neuropathy**

Symptoms can come on from trauma to nerves directly or from several underlying medical conditions, among them diabetes.

- Your toes feel prickly or may burn
- Symptoms often are worse at night
- Gradual onset of symptoms
- Tingling may progress up your legs
- It may appear in your hands
- Skin becomes very sensitive to touch
- Electric like jabs may happen
- You may notice onset of clumsiness
- Muscle weakness
- In early stage symptoms come and go

### **Who Gets It?**

It is not present in children or young adults unless caused by an injury. The disease definitely is present more and more as people age. Peripheral Neuropathy caused by other medical conditions begins to be present in perhaps 2% of people under 50 years and increases to 8% of people over 70 years. These are approximate figures.

This is a complex subject that deserves at least another article to do it justice. There are a lot more aspects to cover so I hope you can join us next week to learn more about the diagnosis and treatment of peripheral neuropathy.

**Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website**

What if I told you all the musculoskeletal information you need is in one place? It is! Log on to [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com) and you will find -

- The office website and library
- Your Orthopaedic Connection
- Gratiot County Herald Archive of every article I have written (complete text at the click of a mouse).

It contains tons of information you or someone in your family can use.

All of the information available contains what I am treating daily in the office and hospital. I urge you to log on and check it out.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush