

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

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.

Office Website and Argus Orthopaedic Archive

I hope what you have read has raised questions. No problem!

Please log onto www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It has a huge amount of musculoskeletal information in the Website and the Archive of all previous Argus articles.

Check it out and be amazed what you can learn.

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

Dr. Haverbush