

# Peripheral

## Neuropathy



### What is it?

Peripheral neuropathy is the type of nerve damage to the peripheral nervous system that can cause pain, numbness or weakness.

The peripheral nervous system is a vast network of nerves that send signals between the central nervous system CNS (the brain and spinal cord) and all other parts of the body.

Peripheral nerves send many types of information to the brain and spinal cord, such as the message that your feet are cold. They also carry signals from the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body. Best known are the signals to the muscles that tell them to contract, which is how we move, but there are different types of signals that help control everything from our heart and blood vessels, digestion, urination and to our bones and immune system.

### How do I know I have it?



The peripheral nerves are like cables that connect different parts of a computer or connect to the Internet. When they malfunction, complex functions can grind to a halt. Symptoms can range from mild to disabling, but are rarely life-threatening.

The symptoms depend on the type of nerve fibres affected and the type and severity of damage. Symptoms may develop over days, weeks, or years.

In some cases, symptoms improve on their own and may not require advanced care. Unlike nerve cells in the CNS, peripheral nerve cells continue to grow throughout life.

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## How can it be treated?

Treatments depend entirely on what has caused the damage, the type of nerve damaged, symptoms, and location.

Your doctor may refer you to a neurologist who can explain how nerve damage is causing your specific symptoms and how to minimize and manage them. Treatment can allow for some functional recovery over time, as long as the nerve cell itself is still viable. Some nerve damage is irreversible and permanent, and some are able to recover or regenerate.

Correcting underlying causes can result in the neuropathy resolving on its own as the nerves recover or regenerate. Nerve health and resistance can be improved by healthy lifestyle habits such as maintaining optimal weight, avoiding toxic exposures, eating a balanced diet, and correcting vitamin deficiencies. Some causes are unavoidable, for example, where the origin is genetic.



## How can I prevent it in the future?

The best treatment is prevention, strategies for reducing injuries are highly effective and well-tested. Since medical procedures ranging from casting fractures to injuries from needles and surgery are at risk of causing damage to the nerves, unnecessary procedures should be avoided.

Diabetes and some other diseases are common preventable causes of peripheral neuropathy. Where it is not preventable, a number of things can be done to help manage the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy.

To find out more, speak to one of our podiatrists who will be able to tell you more about peripheral neuropathy in the foot, or contact your doctor for further advice.

*For more information, contact us  
at Tel. [0118 304 9389](tel:01183049389)  
[or book online](#)*

