

Peripheral Neuropathy

Peripheral Neuropathy is the injury to small nerves in your hands and feet. These nerves allow you to feel pain, touch, temperature, and vibrations. Some chemotherapy drugs may cause damage to the peripheral nerves. Damage to these nerves may result in numbness, tingling or partial loss of some of these sensations.

Symptoms

There are many different symptoms that can occur with peripheral neuropathy. Be sure to tell your healthcare team of all symptoms you are experiencing, even if they are not listed below.

Sensory symptoms:

- Numbness and tingling, or a feeling of pins and needles in your hands and/or feet.
- Extreme sensitivity to touch.
- Painful burning or shocks in your hands or feet.
- Lack of feeling in arms and legs, dulled sensations.
- Ringing in your ears or difficulty hearing.
- Changes in your vision.
- Inability to tell the difference between hot and cold temperatures.

Movement symptoms:

- Difficulty picking up objects or buttoning your shirt or blouse.
- Frequently dropping things due to decrease in grip strength.
- Problems with muscle strength and coordination (such as difficulty lifting your foot from the gas pedal to the brake when driving).
- Muscle cramps, heaviness, or weakness in the arms and/or legs.
- Difficulty walking.
- Muscle weakness.

Other symptoms:

- Difficulty emptying your bladder or bladder leakage issues.
- Constipation that is new.

Preventing further injury

It is important to make sure that you have a safe environment at home. The following list has some suggestions to make your home safe and comfortable when dealing with peripheral neuropathy. Call your healthcare team immediately if you start to show symptoms of peripheral neuropathy.

Things to do

Healthy Lifestyle Changes:

- Quit smoking if you smoke. Your healthcare team can provide you with resources.
- Manage and check your blood glucose if you have diabetes.
- Talk to your healthcare team about your diet. You may be instructed to start a high-fiber diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids (at least six 8-ounce glasses per day).
- Exercise by gently stretching your muscles and walking.
- Gently massage your feet and hands to relieve stiffness. This may help keep your muscles flexible. Clean slippery lotions and creams off your hands and feet when the massage is done.
- Routinely check your hands and feet for any small injuries such as cuts or bruises.
- Wear gloves and socks in cold weather.
- Wear comfortable and supportive shoes.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about driving safety.

Make Your Home Safe:

- Check bath water and shower water temperature with a non-breakable water thermometer. Adjust to a safe temperature (warm but not hot, below 110 degrees F).
- Use rubber gloves to wash dishes.
- Use lightweight, non-breakable glasses, utensils, and plates.
- Use potholders and oven mitts to handle items such as hot pots and pans.
- Wear rubber shoes or work boots when you work in the garage or garden.
- Place non-slip surfaces or mats in showers, bathtubs, floors, and stairs.
- Install lights in every doorway to help prevent falls.
- Install handrails on both sides of all stairways.

Things to avoid:

- Chairs, tables, or nightstands with wheels.
- Motorized yard and garage equipment.
- Walking barefoot.
- Extreme temperatures.
- Lifting heavy objects.
- Tripping hazards and clutter in walkways.

Peripheral Neuropathy Questionnaire

Check the box that best describes how you have felt in the past seven days. If you are having any of the following symptoms, you need to call your healthcare team. They can help treat your peripheral neuropathy or make any changes to your treatment.

	Never	Sometimes	All the Time
I have numbness or tingling in my hands			
I have numbness or tingling in my feet			
I feel discomfort in my hands			
I feel discomfort in my feet			
I have joint pain or muscle cramps			
I feel weak all over			
I have trouble hearing			
I get a ringing or buzzing in my ears			
I have trouble writing			
I drop things			
I have trouble buttoning buttons or zippering zippers			
I have trouble feeling the shape of small objects when they are in my hand			
I have trouble walking (tripping, falling)			
I have trouble walking up stairs			

Other symptoms I am experiencing:

If you are having problems during business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), please call 732-235-2465 and the operator will direct your call. If it is after business hours, on a holiday or weekend, please call the same number and our answering service will assist you.