

## Neuropathy Causes

- **Diabetes**
- **Dietary deficiencies**, e.g., Vitamins B-1, B-6, B-12, E, and niacin
- **Hereditary disorders**, such as Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease
- **Excessive alcohol use**
- **Viral & bacterial infections**, including:
  - AIDS or HIV
  - Lyme disease
  - Shingles
  - Epstein-Barr
  - Hepatitis C
- **Autoimmune diseases**, such as:
  - Guillain-Barre syndrome
  - Lupus
  - Rheumatoid arthritis
  - Polyarteritis nodosa
  - Sarcoidosis
- **Other diseases**, including:
  - Amyloidosis
  - Kidney or liver disease
  - Underactive thyroid
- **Exposure to toxic substances**, such as:
  - Industrial chemicals, especially solvents
  - Heavy metals, e.g., lead, arsenic, mercury
  - Nitrous oxide
- **Neuropathy secondary to drugs**. Many drugs, including some used for chemotherapy, can cause neuropathy.
- **Trauma or pressure on the nerve**
  - Compression of a nerve by casts, splints, braces, crutches, or other devices
  - Motor vehicle accidents, falls, or sports injuries can sever or damage nerves
  - Repetitive motions
  - Prolonged pressure on the nerve (e.g., a long surgery or lengthy illness)
- **Idiopathic**, i.e., neuropathies for which there is no known cause. 30% of neuropathies are labeled idiopathic.

## Neuropathy Symptoms

Symptoms depend on the nerve type affected (motor, sensory, autonomic). One or more nerve types may be damaged. Usually symptoms first appear in the feet or hands.

- **Tingling or buzzing sensations**
- **Numbness** (which often begins in a toe or finger and spreads up the limb)
  - Feeling like you are wearing a glove/sock
  - Loss of touch sensation (dropping paper & other items; lack of dexterity)
- **Neuropathic pain** (burning or freezing, tightness as if a band is around your foot, stabbing pain or electric shock sensations)
- **Extreme sensitivity to touch**
- **Weakness**
- **Loss of balance**
- **Muscle twitching or cramps**
- **If autonomic nerves** that control involuntary or semi-voluntary functions are affected, symptoms may relate to internal organs or blood pressure

## Neuropathy Treatments

Some neuropathies may be cured; most cannot. Treating the underlying disease, if known, may improve symptoms. Other treatments:

- **Pain control**
  - Tricyclic antidepressants, e.g., amitriptyline & nortriptyline, and also Cymbalta
  - Anti-seizure drugs, e.g., gabapentin (Neurontin), Topamax, pregabalin (Lyrica), Tegretol, & Dilantin
  - Narcotics, e.g., opioids
  - Lidocaine patches & various creams
  - Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) unit.
  - Spinal cord implant.
- **Nutritional supplements**, e.g., vitamins, alpha lipoic acid, acetyl L-carnitine
- **Physical therapy** (exercise, massage)
- **Mechanical aids**, e.g., canes, walkers, wheel chairs

# Desert Neuropathy Support Group

we care

we share

we're informed

We are affiliated with the Neuropathy Association, the leading national non-profit organization serving the peripheral neuropathy community.

If you have neuropathy, think you might have it, or know someone who has it, our group is here so we can help each other.

We are a caring group. We provide information you can trust. And, we learn valuable information from each other as we share our individual experiences with neuropathy and our knowledge of local doctors and other resources.

Come join us at one of our meetings.

### MEETINGS

2nd Friday of every month  
2:30 to 4:00 p.m.  
Mizell Senior Center  
480 S. Sunrise Way  
Palm Springs, CA

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.desertneuropathysupportgroup.org](http://www.desertneuropathysupportgroup.org)

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