

Peripheral neuropathy is a condition that results from damage to the peripheral nerves, which transmit messages between the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) and the rest of the body.

This damage can be caused by a wide range of factors, including diabetes, infections, autoimmune disorders, vitamin deficiencies, alcoholism, exposure to toxins, and certain medications. In some cases, the cause of peripheral neuropathy may be unknown and is labelled as idiopathic following appropriate testing.

Peripheral neuropathy can manifest in many different ways, depending on the nerves that are affected. Some common symptoms include numbness or tingling in the hands or feet, muscle weakness, sensitivity to touch or temperature changes, and loss of coordination.

In addition to these physical symptoms, peripheral neuropathy can result in emotional and psychological symptoms, such as depression and anxiety.

One of the most important aspects of managing peripheral neuropathy is taking steps to prevent further damage to the nerves. This includes good blood sugar control for those with diabetes, avoiding toxins and medications that can cause nerve damage, and addressing any underlying medical conditions that may be contributing to the neuropathy.

In addition to these preventive measures, there are a variety of treatments available for the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy, including medications and physical therapy.

For neuropathic pain specifically, medications such as gabapentin, pregabalin, duloxetine and tricyclic antidepressants can be effective in reducing pain. In some cases, stronger painkillers, nerve blocks or other interventional procedures may be recommended.

It is important to work closely with a healthcare provider to determine the best treatment approach for your specific symptoms and underlying causes of neuropathy.

Regular foot care is also extremely important for people with peripheral neuropathy, as the condition can cause a loss of sensation in the feet and increase the risk of injuries and infections. This may include daily foot inspections, keeping feet clean and dry, wearing well-fitting shoes, and avoiding high-impact activities that could cause foot injuries.