

# Nerve Pain in Diabetes

## What is nerve pain in diabetes?

Nerve pain with diabetes is called neuropathy (new-ROP-uh-thee). It is common in people with uncontrolled diabetes. It usually starts in the feet and may go up the legs. It may cause burning pain or a loss of feeling.

## What causes it?

Nerves are like wires that bring feeling to your brain from other parts of the body. High blood sugar levels can damage those nerves. The longer you have high blood sugar, the more likely you are to get nerve damage. The nerves in your feet are usually the first to be damaged. Nerves in other parts of the body can be damaged, too.

## How do I know if I have it?

If you have nerve damage in your feet, you will notice pain or loss of feeling. Your doctor can do tests to be sure that is what is causing the problem.

## How is it treated?

If you feel pain in your feet, there are medicines and other treatments that can help. Make sure your doctor knows what other medicines you take to avoid bad reactions. If you have loss of

feeling in your feet and it affects your balance, there are special shoes that can help.

## What can I expect?

Medicine will lessen the pain for many patients, but most will still have some pain. It is also important to wear proper fitting shoes. And, every time you see the doctor, have the doctor check your feet for injuries you cannot feel.

## Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP's Patient Education Resource

<http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/diabetic-neuropathy.html>

American Diabetes Association

<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/neuropathy/peripheral-neuropathy.html>

National Institutes of Health and National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/Diabetes/diabetic-neuropathies-nerve-damage-diabetes/Pages/diabetic-neuropathies-nerve-damage.aspx>

National Library of Medicine

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000693.htm>  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/diabeticnerveproblems.html>

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**This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.**

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