

Diabetic Neuropathy



What is diabetic neuropathy?

Diabetic neuropathy is nerve damage that can occur in people with diabetes. Different types of nerve damage cause different symptoms. Symptoms can range from pain and numbness in your feet to problems with the functions of your internal organs, such as your heart and bladder. Over time, high blood glucose levels, also called blood sugar, and high levels of fats, such as triglycerides, in the blood from diabetes can damage your nerves. Symptoms depend on which type of diabetic neuropathy you have.

What are the different Types of diabetic neuropathy?

Peripheral Neuropathy:

Peripheral neuropathy is a type of nerve damage that typically affects the feet and legs and sometimes affects the hands and arms. This type of neuropathy is very common. About one-third to one-half of people with diabetes have peripheral neuropathy.

Autonomic Neuropathy:

Autonomic neuropathy is damage to nerves that control your internal organs, leading to problems with your heart rate and blood pressure, digestive system, bladder, sex organs, sweat glands, and eyes. The damage can also lead to hypoglycemia unawareness.

Focal Neuropathies:

Focal neuropathies are conditions in which you typically have damage to single nerves, most often in your hand, head, torso, or leg. The most common types of focal neuropathy are entrapment syndromes, such as carpal tunnel syndrome. Other types of focal neuropathy are much less common.

Proximal Neuropathy:

Proximal neuropathy is a rare and disabling type of nerve damage in your hip, buttock, or thigh. The damage typically affects one side of your body and may rarely spread to the other side. Symptoms gradually improve over a period of months or years.

Who is Most likely to get diabetic neuropathy?

If you have diabetes, your chance of developing nerve damage caused by diabetes increases the older you get and the longer you have diabetes. Managing your diabetes is an important part of preventing health problems such as diabetic neuropathy.

You are also more likely to develop nerve damage if you have diabetes and:

- are overweight
- have high blood pressure
- have high cholesterol
- have advanced kidney disease
- drink too many alcoholic drinks
- smoke

Research also suggests that certain genes may make people more likely to develop diabetic neuropathy.

How common is diabetic neuropathy?

Although different types of diabetic neuropathy can affect people who have diabetes, research suggests that up to one-half of people with diabetes have peripheral neuropathy.^{1,2} More than 30 percent of people with diabetes have autonomic neuropathy.

The most common type of focal neuropathy is carpal tunnel syndrome NIH external link, in which a nerve in your wrist is compressed. Although less than 10 percent of people with diabetes

feel symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, about 25 percent of people with diabetes have some nerve compression at the wrist.²

Other focal neuropathies and proximal neuropathy are less common

What are the symptoms of diabetic neuropathy?

Your symptoms depend on which type of diabetic neuropathy you have. In peripheral neuropathy, some people may have a loss of sensation in their feet, while others may have burning or shooting pain in their lower legs. Most nerve damage develops over many years, and some people may not notice symptoms of mild nerve damage for a long time. In some people, severe pain begins suddenly.

What problems does diabetic neuropathy cause?

Peripheral neuropathy can lead to foot complications, such as sores, ulcers, and infections, because nerve damage can make you lose feeling in your feet. As a result, you may not notice that your shoes are causing a sore or that you have injured your feet. Nerve damage can also cause problems with balance and coordination, leading to falls and fractures.

These problems may make it difficult for you to get around easily, causing you to lose some of your independence. In some people with diabetes, nerve damage causes chronic pain, which can lead to anxiety and depression NIH external link.

Autonomic neuropathy can cause problems with how your organs work, including problems with your heart rate and blood pressure, digestion, urination, and ability to sense when you have low blood glucose.

How can I prevent diabetic neuropathy?

To prevent diabetic neuropathy, it is important to manage your diabetes by managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

You should also take the following steps to help prevent diabetes-related nerve damage:

- be physically active
- follow your diabetes meal plan
- get help to quit smoking External link
- limit alcoholic drinks to no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men
- take any diabetes medicines and other medicines your doctor prescribes

How can I prevent diabetic neuropathy from getting worse?

If you have diabetic neuropathy, you should manage your diabetes, which means managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and weight to keep nerve damage from getting worse.

Foot care is very important for all people with diabetes, and it's even more important if you have peripheral neuropathy. Check your feet for problems every day and take good care of your feet. See your doctor for a neurological exam and a foot exam at least once a year—more often if you have foot problems.



For more information on diabetes, or to make an appointment, call your Weeks primary care provider at 603-788-5095.

The Diabetes Support Group monthly newsletter is produced by Weeks Medical Center Registered Nurse and Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, Ashley Clauss. If you have any questions regarding the Diabetes Support Group, contact Ashley at 603-788-5659. Not only is this support group for patients with diabetes, but also their family, caregiver, and support person. All are welcome. We are always looking for new members!



Next Meeting... Please Join Us

We will resume in person support group, October 18, 2022, PROMPTLY at 7pm, please arrive by 7:05pm as the doors will be locked and you will be unable to enter the building. Please use the Lancaster Patient Care Center GROUND FLOOR ENTRANCE. This is the entrance that is located off from Brickyard Rd. Reminder: Masks are required to attend.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Mini-Pumpkin Tarts

No one will ever know this simple dessert is diabetes-friendly! It is a holiday treat!

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz light cream cheese (softened)
- 30 Mini-Nilla wafer cookies
- ¼ cup light sour cream
- ¼ cup Splenda Sugar Blend
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¾ cup canned pur pumpkin
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 pinch nutmeg

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Line mini-muffin pan with paper baking cups and place one Nilla wafer in the bottom of each cup.
3. In medium bowl, add remaining ingredients and mix with an electric mixture until smooth.
4. Fill each muffin cup with pumpkin-cream cheese mixture.
5. Place muffin pan in oven and bake for 30 minutes or until done. Serve cool.

NUTRITION FACTS

Servings Per Recipe: 30, Serving Size: 1 tart, Calories 40, Total Fat 2.5g, Satfat 1.2g, Cholesterol 15mg, Sodium 40mg, Total Carbohydrated 4g, Dietary Fiber 0g, Total Sugars 3g, Protein 1g, Potassium 30mg.



https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/mini-pumpkin-tarts.htmlhtml?home-category_id=1