

Relief for the discomforts of peripheral neuropathy

Peripheral neuropathies can be caused by certain chemotherapy treatments. The most common problems are feelings of tingling or burning, loss of touch sensation, and loss of balance, and pain.

The most effective treatment for peripheral neuropathy is focused on prevention.

- Your chemotherapy drugs are important for the treatment of your cancer. In order to be able to keep taking your chemotherapy and still find relief from this side effect, dosages are sometimes reduced.

Medication can also be effective:

- Prescribed medications Lyrica and Neurontin are FDA approved for diabetic neuropathy, and can help some people with cancer related neuropathy.

The following remedies are of possible benefit. *It is important to check with your doctor before using any new therapy.*

Medications:

- **Alpha Lipoic Acid:** currently under investigation, some studies show effects with larger doses than found in food
- **Melatonin:** currently under investigation
- **Pain relieving medications:** Many side effects, can interfere with medications. Examples: Tylenol, Toradol, morphine, Percoset, fentanyl patches.
- **Antidepressant medications:** many side effects, each work differently, may take many weeks to take effect. Examples: Elavil, Pamelor, Tofranil, Effexor
- **Benadryl:** can help with itching sensation

Home remedies:

- **Heat/Cold:** use caution with a heating pad. You can fill a large boot sock with uncooked rice and microwave it for two minutes. Warm soaks in the bath feel soothing. Some find cold feels better. Try flexible ice packs.
- **Exercise:** water exercise with flotation devices, walking, leg stretches. Rest is important, increase gradually. Use caution if you have balance problems.
- **Topical creams, especially with capsaicin:** wear rubber gloves to apply

Energy Therapies:

- **Massage/Reflexology**
- **Acupuncture/ Acupressure**
- **Reiki**

Electrical/nerve interventions:

- **Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)**

Vitamin Therapy:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| B1 – Thiamin | B12 – cyanocobalamin |
| B3 – Niacin | B Complex |
| B6 – Pyroxidine | Vitamin E |
| Vitamin K | |

General coping tips:

- Keep busy, concentrate on mind-absorbing activity
- Eliminate caffeine and smoking
- Wear flexible braces such as used for carpal tunnel at night on wrists
- Typing is easier than writing
- Rest periodically, elevate your feet
- Use electric carts in grocery stores if your balance is affected
- Frequently check your feet and hands for small cuts, blisters, etc. You may not feel the injury.

Herbal Remedies/Nutritional supplements:

- **Chondroitin/Glucosamine**
- **Ginkgo biloba**
- **Quinine/Tonic Water**
- **Diet high in inositol** (cantaloupe, peanuts, grapefruits, whole grains)