

# DIABETES

## DOESN'T HAVE TO HURT

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy, or nerve damage caused by diabetes, can be excruciatingly painful and can have a wealth of serious repercussions.

But there is hope. Today, there are many options to help ease painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy, ranging from pharmaceuticals to devices. Learn more:



### WHAT IS PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY?

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy is pain or loss of sensation as a result of nerve damage caused by diabetes. Blood sugar levels that get too high or too low damage the nerves that lead to the feet and prevent them from functioning properly. The resulting burning, tingling, or heaviness may be intensely painful.

Those who lose sensation altogether may not notice an injury or a sore, which could lead to a nonhealing wound or a serious infection. Sometimes a wound or infection becomes so severe that doctors recommend amputation.

Numbness can also lead to balance problems or cause a fall. And people with painful neuropathy often lose sleep and suffer from depression as a result.

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### WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Peripheral neuropathy can feel like numbness, heaviness, or pins and needles. It can also feel like sharp, burning pain. It usually begins in your toes but can progress up the foot, putting you at risk for serious consequences such as non-healing wounds, amputation, and even death.

### WHAT CAN I DO?

Foot pain is *never* normal. People with diabetes should see a podiatrist at the first sign of foot pain, as it can be your first warning of a serious problem. Schedule an appointment with your podiatrist today to get a proper diagnosis. Not all nerve pain in the foot is a result of diabetes. Nerve pain can be caused by other problems, such as a herniated disc in your back or even a vitamin deficiency! It's vital to get the right diagnosis from an expert in the foot and ankle.

There are treatment options for painful neuropathy, including medications and devices that may help relieve your pain. Devices such as spinal nerve stimulators and new medications can make a huge difference in painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy.

Work with your diabetes care team to control your A1C. A healthy diet and exercise, along with medications, can help lower your A1C. A lower A1C can help prevent or slow the progression of neuropathy and will also help wounds heal more quickly, avoiding risk of amputation and infection.

To learn more or find a podiatrist, visit [www.apma.org/diabetes](http://www.apma.org/diabetes) today!

