Diabetic Neuropathy (Nerve Pain)

WHAT IS DIABETIC NEUROPATHY?

Diabetic neuropathy is damage to the nerves that develops slowly after having had diabetes for several years.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DIABETIC NEUROPATHY?

The most common type of diabetic neuropathy causes a loss of sensation in the feet and legs. Symptoms include tingling in the feet and lower legs, numbness and pain. There may also be weakness in the muscles, which causes difficulty walking.

Other types of neuropathies related to diabetes can affect specific parts of the body, such as diabetic amyotrophy. This type of neuropathy affects the thigh muscles and causes weakness and wasting away of the muscles. Diabetic neuropathy can also affect the cranial nerves, causing double vision, drooping of the eyes or dizziness.

WHAT CAUSES DIABETIC NEUROPATHY?

Uncontrolled blood sugar is the most common cause of neuropathy. Having high blood sugar levels over a long period of time results in damage to the sensory nerves.

WHAT ARE THE COMPLICATIONS CAUSED BY DIABETIC NEUROPATHY?

Initially, a burning sensation in the feet, due to high blood sugar levels, could signal the beginning of diabetic neuropathy. Eventually, this burning sensation is replaced by numbness, which can lead to even bigger problems. Some of these difficulties include the forming of calluses and blisters that can lead to ulcers of the feet. And because of the reduction in sensation, bone and joint problems can also be a problem.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR DIABETIC NEUROPATHY?

The main treatment for diabetic neuropathy is aimed at preventing more tissue damage. This is done by routinely controlling blood sugar levels. In addition, it’s key to take care of your feet. This means ensuring that shoes fit properly and checking the feet for any infections or cuts on a regular basis.

Doctors may also suggest using painkillers and low-dose anticonvulsant medications to relieve the pain, burning and tingling of neuropathy.

Finally, some people also get relief from pain by taking regular walks, warm baths, and using elastic stockings.

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