Navigating Neuropathy with Nutrition
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the Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy

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Disclaimer

• This information is for educational purposes only.

• I am not a physician. Please check with your doctor or qualified health care provider before beginning any diet, lifestyle change or supplement regimens to confirm there are no contraindications.
Also to note:

• Every patient that suffers from peripheral neuropathy has a **unique** experience.

• The cause of one’s neuropathy plays a huge role!
  • Diabetes
  • Chemotherapy
  • Hereditary
  • Autoimmune
  • Idiopathic
  • And even Vitamin and Nutrition Deficiency, including **Vitamin B12**

• What are a patient’s symptoms?

• There is currently no cure for neuropathy; however, a combination of treatments and lifestyle changes are prescribed to help manage symptoms.
Neuropathy is a common side effect of certain medications, especially those used in chemotherapy to fight cancer.

Some of the drugs that may cause peripheral neuropathy include:

- Anti-alcohol drugs (Disulfiram)
- Anticonvulsants: Phenytoin (Dilantin®)
- Cancer medications (Cisplatin)
- Vincristine
- Heart or blood pressure medications (Amiodarone)
- Hydralazine
- Perhexiline
- Infection fighting drugs (Metronidazole, Flagyl®, Fluoroquinolones: Cipro®, Levaquin®)
- Nitrofurantoin
- Thalidomide
- INH (Isoniazid)
- Skin condition treatment drugs (Dapsone)
CIPN Treatment & Therapy

(Not all treatments and therapies may be indicated.)

Therapies focus on treating the symptoms, including:

- Medications causing the neuropathy may be stopped or altered
- Over-the-counter pain medications for mild pain
- For severe pain, take over-the-counter pain medication or prescription drugs used for peripheral neuropathy, on a regular basis—rather than waiting until nighttime when symptoms can become more severe
- Antidepressants (for pain control)
- Take safety measures to compensate for loss of sensation
- Ask your doctor about special therapeutic shoes (which may be covered by Medicare and other insurance)
- Lifestyle changes – including diet and exercise!

Reference: The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy’s website
Nutrition: Omega-3 Fatty Acids

- Fish, flaxseeds, walnuts
- Supplements: 3:2 ratio of DHA:EPA
- Target 1000mg/day of Omega-3 Fatty acids (there may be excess bleed with higher doses)
- May help with nerve regeneration in type 1 diabetic neuropathy
Nutrition: Fruits & Vegetables

• Fruits and vegetables - 5 servings/day

• Choose brightly-colored fruits and veggies
  • Ex: tomatoes, berries, broccoli, avocado, and spinach

• Berries = brain food
  • May function as a natural “Aricept”
Nutrition: Gluten-Free Diet

- May be helpful for weight loss, metabolic syndrome, diabetes

- Some substitutes:
  - Brown rice
  - Quinoa
  - Teff
  - Buckwheat

A study published in *Muscle & Nerve* in Dec. 2006, found that patients who followed a gluten-free diet showed improvements in their neuropathy symptoms after one year.
Nutrition

• Avoid/reduce alcohol intake
• Cut sugar, artificial sweeteners
• Reduce processed foods
  • If you can’t pronounce it, don’t buy it
• Eat what you can digest
  • Kale, cauliflower, lentils, beans, chickpeas
• Reduce dairy intake
• Conventional vs organic foods
  • Neonicotinoids
  • Neurologic effects
Nutrition – Specific Diets

• Vegetarian diet + Exercise for diabetic PN
  • Improved pain in 17 of 21 SFN patients

• Low-fat, plant-based diet with B12 supplementation + weekly classes in diabetic PN (RCT)
  • Weight loss, reduced pain, improved electrical skin conductance (Sudoscan)

• Low Carbohydrate
• Ketogenic
• Anti-Inflammatory

Bunner et al. Nutr Diabet 2015;5:e158
Thank You!

*The* Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy is a 501(c)3 organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of patients living with peripheral neuropathy.

- Learn more at [www.foundationforpn.org](http://www.foundationforpn.org).
- Subscribe to our email distribution list.
- Questions? We’re happy to help! Contact us at [info@tffpn.org](mailto:info@tffpn.org).
Questions?