



Peripheral Neuropathy

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What is peripheral neuropathy?

Peripheral neuropathy is a condition resulting from damage in your peripheral nerves. Your peripheral nervous system is responsible for transmitting information from your central nervous system (your brain and spinal cord) to the other areas of your body. As a result of nerve damage due to direct injury, toxin exposure, infection, or underlying medical conditions, such as diabetes, you may feel persistent tingling or weakness in your hands, feet, and other parts of your body. For some, chronic pain can develop, which may feel like a persistent tingling, stabbing, or burning sensation in the affected area.

Dr. Hung also treats other conditions commonly co-existing in metabolic peripheral neuropathy because they result from nerve damage or compression, including tarsal tunnel syndrome. This condition results from too much pressure on the nerves in the tibial nerve in your ankle, causing weakness and tingling in your feet. Fibular tunnel syndrome can also develop, causing tingling of the top of the foot or weakness such as foot drop. Depending on the severity of your peripheral neuropathy symptoms, Dr. Hung creates a treatment plan that addresses the nerve damage.

What are the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy?

The initial indication you may have peripheral neuropathy is the gradual numbness you feel in your hands and feet that eventually spreads into your legs and arms. You may also develop serious sensitivity to touch or find it difficult to coordinate your steps when walking, putting you at risk for falls. You may also develop foot drop as a result of peripheral neuropathy.

What is foot drop?

Foot drop is a symptom of an underlying medical condition, such as peripheral neuropathy, that makes it difficult to lift the front part of your foot. As a result of nerve issues, foot drop causes you to drag your foot on the floor when you walk. An AFO brace can help keep your foot up in chronic cases.

In some cases, foot drop is a temporary side effect of nerve damage. However, you can develop permanent complications that require bracing to hold your leg and foot in the proper position. If the condition is not treated promptly, it can become permanent.

What treatments are available for peripheral neuropathy?

There are many nonsurgical options available for easing the symptoms of peripheral and diabetic neuropathy. Initially, treatment may include physical therapy to improve muscle strength or gait and balance, and over-the-counter or prescription medication to alleviate pain.

When nerve pain, tingling, or weakness persist because of inflammation or structural issues, Dr. Hung may recommend surgery. Through open surgical techniques or minimally invasive procedures, she can make necessary changes to the affected area to relieve nerve pressure. Using treatments designed for your unique situation, Dr. Hung's goal is to alleviate your pain and other symptoms to improve your quality of life.