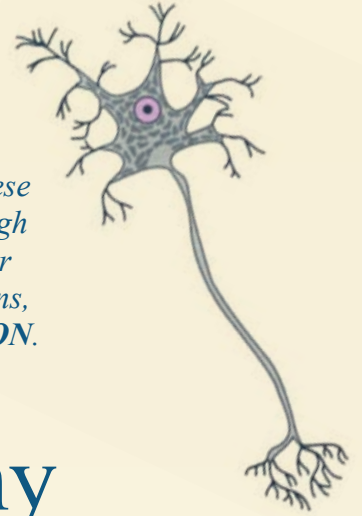




# Diabetes Education

Over time high blood sugars lead to complications that **DAMAGE** the large and small blood vessels in the body. Because we have nerves throughout our bodies just about every function the body performs can be affected by this nerve damage. Eventually these damaged nerves can no longer send messages through the body normally. This is the general description for diabetic neuropathy. Of all the diabetes complications, this one is the **LEADING CAUSE OF DEPRESSION**.



## The Symptoms:

The symptoms will vary depending on which nerves are damaged.

The **MOST COMMON** type of neuropathy (*also called sensorimotor*) affects the small and large nerves that are farthest from the heart and affect the senses.

The **SECOND TYPE** affects the different organs (*also called autonomic*) and bodily functions.

- Heart
- Stomach  
(*gastrointestinal*)
- Reproductive and urinary
- Altered temperature regulation
- Hormones that control blood sugars

## Neuropathy

### What Are the Symptoms?

You might experience the following symptoms if you have the **MOST** common type of neuropathy or sensorimotor neuropathy:

- ✓ Pins and needles, tingling, burning
- ✓ Pain usually feels like stocking glove on legs
- ✓ Usually felt at night
- ✓ Feel off balance when standing or when walking

With the second type or autonomic neuropathy the symptoms will depend on the organ affected:

#### Heart:

- Dizziness when going to stand (*hypotension*)
- High resting heart rate
- Or fixed heart rate if at rest or with physical activity
- Silent heart attack (*myocardial infarction*) – chest pain in any location with diabetes should be considered a myocardial infarction unless proven otherwise requiring **IMMEDIATE** medical attention.

#### Other Symptoms:

- Unexplained tiredness
- Sweating
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Cough
- Confusion
- Heart Palpitations

#### Stomach:

- Pain with swallowing
- Constipation
- Nausea or vomiting
- Gastroparesis  
(*feeling of early fullness after eating*)
- Reflux
- Diarrhea
- Change in bowel habits

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# Neuropathy

## What Do I Do If I Have These Symptoms?

Take heed to some of these suggestions to minimize or get rid of symptoms.

### Know Your ABC's of Diabetes:

(Reach Your GOALS)

**A** ✓ EVERY 3-6 MONTHS

- **A1c:** Below 7%

**B** ✓ EVERY VISIT

- **Blood Pressure:** Below 130/80mmHg

**C** ✓ ONCE A YEAR

- **Cholesterol:**  
LDL: Below 100mg/dL  
HDL: Above 40mg/dL for Men & Above 50mg/dL for Women

**⊙ Blood Glucose Targets:**

- Fasting, 90-130mg/dL
- 2 Hours after eating, Less Than 180mg/dL

## What Are the Symptoms? (Cont.)

### Reproductive and Urinary:

- Bladder dysfunction
- Erectile dysfunction in both men and women
- Decreased vaginal lubrication
- Urinary tract infections
- Incontinence
- Decreased libido

### Altered Temperature Regulation:

- Decreased ability to detect temperature changes
- Less prone to sweating which helps keep body temperature cooler
- Skin tends to be drier as a result

### Hormones that Control Blood Sugars:

- Hormones that raise low blood sugar are affected
- Hypoglycemic unawareness is a problem

## What Do I Do If I Have These Symptoms?

### Sensorimotor Neuropathy (*small and large nerve vessels*):

- Maintain a normal blood pressure
- Keep blood sugars in normal goal range

### Autonomic Neuropathy (*organs and bodily functions*):

- Hypotension (*low blood pressure*)
  - Keep blood sugars in goal range
  - Wear compression stockings when lying down
  - Keep sodium intake in check
  - Take medications, drink enough fluids
- Gastroparesis ...*feeling of early fullness after eating*
  - Blood glucose control
  - Small, low-fat feedings and take prescribed medications
- Constipation
  - Regular exercise
  - Daily fiber consumption
  - adequate hydration
  - take medications as prescribed
- Diarrhea
  - Blood glucose control
  - Antibiotic if prescribed
  - Antidiarrheal agents
  - Follow bowel program if prescribed
- Bladder dysfunction
  - Scheduled voiding **EVERY** 3 to 4 hours
  - Take antibiotic if prescribed



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