Pinched Nerve

The term pinched nerve describes one type of damage or injury to a nerve or set of nerves. Pinched nerves can sometimes lead to other conditions. These include peripheral neuropathy, carpal tunnel syndrome, and tennis elbow. The extent of such injuries may vary from minor, temporary damage to a more permanent condition. Early diagnosis is important to prevent further damage or complications. Pinched nerve is a common cause of on-the-job injury.

CAUSES

The injury may result from:

- Compression.
- Constriction.
- Stretching.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms include:

- Numbness.
- "Pins and needles" or burning sensations.
- Pain radiating outward from the injured area.
- One of the most common examples of a single compressed nerve is the feeling of having a foot or hand "fall asleep."

TREATMENT

The most often recommended treatment for pinched nerve is rest for the affected area. Corticosteroids help alleviate pain. In some cases, surgery is recommended. Physical therapy may be recommended. Splints or collars may be used.

With treatment, most people recover from pinched nerve. But, in some cases, the damage is irreversible.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

Within the NINDS research programs, pinched nerves are addressed primarily through studies associated with pain research. NINDS pursues a research program seeking new treatments for pain and nerve damage with the ultimate goal of reversing debilitating conditions such as pinched nerves.

Research is continually being done to learn more about this problem.

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