

DYSFUNCTION OF THE PERIPHERAL NERVES

■ Important information for you

Certain medications used in chemotherapy have a toxic effect on the nervous system. The peripheral nerves in your hands and feet are most sensitive to this toxicity. The signs may appear days or weeks after the beginning of your treatment. They usually diminish once the therapy is terminated, but sometimes persist for a long time and can even be irreversible. Recovery time from slight injuries is two to three months; more serious damage may take more than two years to heal.

Signs to note

- ▶ Pins and needles, numbness, tingling, a loss of strength.
- ▶ A loss of sensitivity or, to the contrary, exacerbated sensitivity.
- ▶ Difficulty performing complicated manoeuvres with the fingers: tying shoe laces, writing, buttoning a shirt etc.
- ▶ Changes in your hearing or abnormal noises (tinnitus).

Let your care team know about these symptoms because they can quickly become a handicap.



INFO

Diabetics or persons who are under-nourished, have a kidney insufficiency or consume excessive amounts of alcohol are at greater risk of developing a dysfunction of the peripheral nerves.

Some advice

- ▶ Wear comfortable shoes and avoid high heels or stiff materials.
- ▶ Protect your hands with suitable gloves when doing housework or odd jobs.
- ▶ Check the soles of your feet carefully, with a mirror if need be, to detect any injury you may not have been aware of.
- ▶ Take the temperature of the bath with a thermometer if you cannot trust the sensitivity of your hands or feet.
- ▶ Walk carefully on sloping ground. Lessened sensitivity in your feet may cause you to lose your balance and fall.
- ▶ Don't hesitate to ask for an appropriate pain medicine. Neurological pain doesn't always respond to standard painkillers.



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INFO

Certain forms of chemotherapy make one hypersensitive to cold or heat. If you are having this type of treatment, your care team will give you specific advice.