

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) is an uncommon painful condition that usually affects one extremity after an injury or trauma to that limb. This condition is most often mild and self-limiting but may become severe and chronic. Early treatment is important for a successful outcome so make an appointment with a pain management specialist if you have any of the following symptoms.

Symptoms

Prolonged, excessive pain that is out of proportion to the severity of the initial injury. Pain may feel like a burning, throbbing, squeezing sensation, or like pins and needles throughout the entire extremity even if the injury was to a small area, such as a finger or toe. The limb may feel hot and appear red and swollen; or it may feel cold and appear blotchy, white or blue. Temperature may fluctuate in the extremity and extreme sensitivity may make the lightest touch seem unbearable. Skin texture may become shiny and appear thin. Over time, the extremity may become weak from loss of muscle or muscles may tighten into a fixed position (contracture).

Causes

The cause for CRPS is not yet completely understood. CRPS is similar to allergies in that the body overreacts to the initial assault. It may be that communication between the Central and Peripheral Nervous System becomes dysfunctional and the inflammatory response becomes exaggerated. The initial trigger may be an injury, often times of forceful trauma such as a crush injury or fracture. However, minor injuries, surgery or even a stroke or heart attack may precede this condition.

Testing

Physical examination is the first step to assess your pain. Your doctor may order an X-ray, MRI, bone scan, or sympathetic nervous system test to determine the source of the pain.

Treatment

Treatments for CRPS may include:

- OTC Pain Medication
- Physical Therapy
- Chiropractic Treatment
- Psychotherapy
- Botox Injections
- Nerve Blocks
- Hyperbaric Chamber Therapy
- Ketamin infusion
- Spinal Cord Stimulator

- Intrathecal Pain Pumps