

Natural Help 4...

Neuralgia



What is Neuralgia?

Neuralgia is a disorder which results in severe, spasmodic pain along a nerve or group of nerves. The pain is often described as sharp and shooting, and in more severe cases, **neuralgia is so debilitating and agonizing** that it affects the quality of a person's life. It may affect anyone, but older people tend to be more susceptible to it.

Types of Neuralgia

There are various types of **neuralgia** such as trigeminal, postherpetic, occipital and glossopharyngeal:

Trigeminal neuralgia is also known as tic douloureux and is one of the most common types of **neuralgia**. It affects one side of the face only causing brief but excruciating pain along the trigeminal nerve, which supplies sensation to the face, cheeks and jaw. This type of **neuralgia** may be caused by Multiple Sclerosis or tumors pressing against the nerve, but the causes are generally unknown. The pain may be so agonizing that spasms of the facial muscles (tic) are caused. It lasts between 30 minutes and an hour, and the facial pain occurs at the same time on successive days. Everyday activities such as brushing your teeth, washing your face or eating can trigger pain. Women over the age of 50 years are most commonly affected.

Postherpetic neuralgia is a severe and unbearable pain experienced after an attack of Shingles (herpes infection) has disappeared. The affected area is extremely sensitive to any form of touch and pain is felt immediately. Postherpetic **neuralgia** occurs anywhere on the body, typically where the Shingles rash occurred. The pain may continue for a few months or even years. Infectious diseases that may also cause neuralgia include syphilis and Lyme disease.

Occipital neuralgia occurs as a result of the spasms of pain to the front, back and sides of the head. It may be caused by a pinched nerve, compression of nerves in the spinal column, whiplash or sometimes even diabetes or gout. When tense muscles or ligaments presses against the nerve, irritation, inflammation and pain may occur. This pain is dull, throbbing, tingling and causes numbness. It affects the back of the head, occasionally the forehead.

Glossopharyngeal neuralgia is characterized by intense pain occurring along the glossopharyngeal nerve. Pain occurs spontaneously and is felt in the back of the throat, tonsils, (link to tonsillitis) tongue and occasionally the ears. This pain is usually triggered by talking, yawning, chewing or swallowing.

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

Dignosing Neuralgia

Neuralgia is based on a thorough on a **neurological or dental examination** as well as a complete medical history. Generally, your **symptoms and location of pain** will confirm the diagnosis of neuralgia. During the physical examination, your doctor will also be able to ascertain the underlying cause of your symptoms – for instance, if you have sinus or problems with your jaw. Blood tests to check for infection may be ordered as well as x-rays to check whether the affected nerves have being compressed.

Symptoms of Neuralgia

Common symptoms include:

- Pain found in the same location for each episode, on or near the surface of the body, or along the path of a specific nerve
- Sharp, burning or stabbing pain
- Affected area is sensitive to touch
- Pressure or touch to the affected area is felt as pain
- Muscle weakness as a result of motor nerve damage
- Movement may be painful

What Causes Neuralgia?

Neuralgia is caused by **nerve damage or irritation** as a result of inflammation, infection, a systemic disease or the compression of a nerve.

The type of neuralgia that occurs depends on the underlying condition that is affecting or irritating the nerve. The irritation is caused as a result of:

- Tooth decay
- Poor diet
- Eating cold foods
- Chewing, yawning, swallowing or talking
- Eye strain
- Nose infections
- Shingles (herpes zoster)
- Exposure to damp and cold
- Arthritis
- Systemic diseases
- A pinched nerve
- Injury

Help for Neuralgia

There are specific treatment options to **reduce the symptoms of the various types of neuralgia**. To relieve the symptoms of postherpetic neuralgia, topical pain relievers, TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) and antidepressants are used. Usually antiseizure drugs are prescribed to minimize the pain of postherpetic, trigeminal and glossopharyngeal neuralgias.

Trigeminal neuralgia may be numbed with radio frequency waves, gamma rays or



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

glycerol injections if the patient does not respond to drug treatment. Surgery may also be required if [neuralgia](#) is caused by a tumor or artery compressing the nerve. In addition, **alternative therapies** that include B-complex vitamins, a diet high in protein, carbohydrates and fats as well as acupuncture have also been successful in the [treatment of neuralgia](#).

Natural treatments are very effective for [treating neuralgia](#) and nerve damage, such as herbal and homeopathic remedies and tissue salts. These remedies are not only safe and gentle to use, but also supports general well-being and **improve overall health**. Tissue salts help to maintain cellular health in the organs and nervous systems of the body.

Herbal ingredients such as Zanthoxylum clava herculisis (Toothache Tree) and Matricaria recutita (German Chamomile) contain anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory properties that **soothe the nervous system** while at the same time relieve pain. Other beneficial herbs include Arctium lappa (Burdock) and Harpagophytum procumbens (Devil's Claw) which are excellent for treating [arthritis](#), lumbago, rheumatism, fibrositis, sciatica and small joint disease.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

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Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.



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