

Pain Management

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Central Nervous System (CNS)

The CNS is made up of the brain, the spinal cord, and the nerves. Nerves in the skin and muscles help to protect us from harm and injury.



Normal CNS Response to Pain Stimuli

If our hand touches something hot, the nerves in the skin signal the brain about this danger.

- Brain reads the signal and interprets the type and amount of the pain.
- Brain tells us this pain hurts and sends a message to the muscles in our hand to move.

Central sensitization disorder

CNS changes, distorts, or amplifies pain.

In this disorder, the CNS remains in state of heightened reactivity and sensitivity to all of our senses:

- Touch
- Odors
- Lights
- Sounds

Chronic Pain Response to Normal Stimuli

Over-sensitive nerves receive normal stimuli from our senses.

- Over-sensitive nerves misread this stimuli and send a distorted signal to the brain.
- Brain over-reacts to this signal and may interpret a normal stimuli as painful. It may also interpret a mild pain as severe.

Chronic Pain Disorder Causes

Doctors are not sure what causes this disorder, but they all agree that the brain senses pain differently.

Some cases of centralized pain may be triggered by events such as:

- Infection
- Physical injury
- Illness
- Emotional upset

Genetic factors also might play a role.

Symptoms of Chronic Pain Disorders

Although central sensitization disorder is a chronic condition, symptoms may come and go. Symptoms can be mild at times, and then so severe at other times that they interfere with normal activities.

Symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Fatigue, poor sleep
- Abdominal pain
- Anxiety and depression
- Widespread pain
- Poor memory or concentration

Treating central sensitization

Treatment for chronic pain typically targets the central nervous system.

Our focus is on managing the pain and other symptoms. This often involves a combination of medicines and lifestyle changes, such as:

- Exercise
- Relaxation
- Stress-management
- Improved sleep and diet

These instructions are only general guidelines. Your doctor may give you special instructions. If you have questions or concerns, please call your doctor.