

WHAT IS ALGODYSTROPHY?

Algodystrophy Differs from Person to Person, but 90 % Had a Trigger Injury or Trauma

There are Approximately 200,000 Cases of Algodystrophy in the United States

Algodystrophy, also known as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) and Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome, is a chronic pain condition where high levels of nerve impulses are sent to an affected site.

This resource has been developed to provide information about the causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of CRPS.

01 | Cause

The exact cause of CRPS is unknown. Studies suggest that the syndrome may be caused by an abnormal triggering of the immune response, which leads to inflammatory symptoms. There are two types of CRPS: CRPS-I and CRPS-II. Type I affects individuals without a confirmed nerve injury, whereas Type II, previously known as causalgia, is diagnosed in patients that have suffered an associated, confirmed nerve injury, surgery, stroke or heart attack. The condition is more common in women, and the peak age is 40. It is rare in the elderly and with children under age 5.

02 | Symptoms

The chief symptom of CRPS is persistent severe pain. It is described as a burning or pins and needles sensation. A patient may also experience changes in skin temperature, skin color or swelling due to changes in circulation. Other common features include:

- Changes in skin texture of the affected area
- Abnormal sweating pattern in the affected area
- Changes in nail and hair growth patterns
- Stiffness in the affected joints
- Decreased mobility of the affected area
- Abnormal movement and tremors or jerking of the affected area

03 | Diagnosis

Careful examination is important, as there is no specific test to diagnose Algodystrophy and symptoms can be similar to other conditions. Health care practitioners will request a thorough medical history and perform various tests to rule out other conditions such as arthritis and Lyme Disease. MRI or triple-phase bone scans can be helpful in confirming a positive diagnosis.

04 | Treatment

There are several forms of therapies used to relieve the symptoms of Algodystrophy. Some of the most common include:

- **Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy** – to increase mobility, strength, flexibility and improve blood flow to the affected area.
- **Psychotherapy** – reducing depression, stress and anxiety can provide relief of symptoms.
- **Medications** – different medications may be recommended to address your specific symptoms
- **Sympathetic Nerve Block** – injecting an anesthetic to block pain fibers in the affected area may relieve pain.
- **Intravenous Ketamine** – low doses of this anesthetic have been shown to alleviate pain.

05 | Coping and Support

Living with chronic pain can be frustrating and discouraging. It is important to find a good support system, maintain normal daily activities as best you can, and stay connected with friends and family. These activities, as well as pursuing hobbies that you are able to do can be beneficial and reduce the risk of depression and anxiety, which in turn, can exacerbate the symptoms of CRPS.

To learn more about CRPS and to find support, please visit: <https://rsds.org/>

Did You Know?

75% of Algodystrophy patients are women

References

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Complex-Regional-Pain-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet>

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