



What is Trigeminal Neuralgia?

Approximately 150,000 individuals in the United States are diagnosed every year.

1. Introduction

Trigeminal neuralgia is a chronic pain condition that causes sudden, severe facial pain often described as electric shocks. It affects the trigeminal nerve, which carries sensation from the face to the brain, and typically occurs on one side of the face. Simple daily activities such as brushing teeth, eating, talking, or even a light touch from the wind or makeup can trigger intense pain episodes. Trigeminal neuralgia can progress over time, becoming more frequent and debilitating. While the condition can be life-altering, a range of treatments are available to help manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

2. Causes

Trigeminal neuralgia occurs when the trigeminal nerve is irritated or disrupted, most commonly due to pressure from a nearby blood vessel where the nerve enters the brain. This compression causes the nerve to misfire, resulting in intense pain. Other causes include nerve damage due to multiple sclerosis, tumors, stroke, facial injury or surgery.

3. Symptoms

Trigeminal neuralgia symptoms include:

- + Sudden, severe facial pain that feels sharp, stabbing, or electric shock-like
- + Pain affecting one side of the face
- + Repeated attacks that may occur many times a day and worsen over time
- + Facial muscle twitching or spasms during pain episodes
- + Burning, aching, numbness, or tingling between attacks

4. Treatment

Treatment usually begins with medications that help reduce or block pain signals. Over time, medications may become less effective or cause side effects, leading some patients to consider options such as injections or surgery. Surgical treatments range from procedures that relieve pressure on the nerve to techniques that interrupt pain signals and may provide longer-term relief. The best treatment plan depends on the cause of the condition, symptom severity, and how well a person responds to initial therapies.

Did you know?

Trigeminal neuralgia attacks typically last from a few seconds to up to two minutes.

For more information on Trigeminal neuralgia, please visit [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org).

References:

<https://www.aans.org/patients/conditions-treatments/trigeminal-neuralgia/>

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