

Nutrition and Supplements...

The Missing Link to the Relief of Peripheral Neuropathy

Nutrition and supplements are terms that more people are becoming familiar with the help of the media. However, people have no idea what to use, how to use them or the dose. Many people go to their local natural grocer or vitamin shop and try to understand by reading labels. How does one even know if the nutrition will even help? What nutrition is the missing link to the relief of numbness, tingling, and burning that people have in their hands and/or feet. This article will discuss some of the vitamins that have shown to help with peripheral neuropathy.

Peripheral Neuropathy (PN) is a condition caused by damage to the peripheral nervous system. Symptoms can be described as burning, numbness, tingling, pins and needles, swelling, pain, weakness, electric shocks, and throbbing. There are many possibilities, root causes, for the damage that can occur to nerves in the body. Many people have seen relief through certain supplement and nutrition and even through dietary changes.

Numbness and tingling especially in the hands and feet have been associated with diabetic neuropathy. First, it is important to evaluate and change dietary habits as most often people will see a reduction in symptoms.

Alpha Lipoic Acid (ALA, Lipoic Acid, Thioctic Acid), is an important anti-oxidant that helps blood sugar control as well as reducing that amount of oxidative stress placed on nerves. High blood sugar will release a chemical by product that will result in oxidative damage to nerves. Over time, the nerves will present as symptoms of burning, prickling and tingling. By reducing the oxidative damage, nerves are given a chance to heal. Other antioxidants can have a positive effect such as glutathione, Vitamin E, and essential fatty acids (GLA, EPA, and DHA).

Inflammation can also play a role in peripheral neuropath. They are usually associated with other inflammatory conditions such as Lupus, Rheumatoid Arthritis, and other autoimmune disorders. Glutathione, fish oils, and Vitamin D has been useful in regulating aspects of immune system and reducing inflammation. Inflammation can also be the effect of toxins, food allergies, stress, and certain pathogens (bugs). It is important to find the cause of inflammation and to reduce it along with the use of antioxidants.

N-acetylcysteine (NAC) is another powerful antioxidant as well as a precursor to glutathione. Glutathione is a power antioxidant and a power immune regulator. Glutathione can be taken orally however; transdermal (through the skin) and Intravenous get into the blood stream and appear to be more effective. Another mechanism of increase levels of glutathione in the body is through undenatured whey protein.

Vitamin B12 deficiencies (anemia) can be another cause of peripheral neuropathy. B12 is a water-soluble vitamin found in different types of food such as meat, eggs, shellfish, and dairy. Vitamin B12's primary function is to maintain the integrity of nerves, formation of red blood cells, and the synthesis of DNA. B12 is release from protein by hydrochloric acid in the stomach during digestion. Once the process is complete, B12 is bound to intrinsic factor (IF) and then absorbed in the blood stream. A disruption in this process cause nerves to lose their integrity. When evaluating a person a practitioner will consider many factors. Some of the more common are found by looking at dietary habits, lifestyle (stress), and gastrointestinal (GI) function.

Vegetarians are prone to B12 anemia due to lack meat in their diet. There is B12 found in some vegetation like fermented soy products, seaweed, and spirulina (algae) however is thought to have no bioavailability to human absorption. They will often need to supplement this vitamin to their diet. Stress in this country is an epidemic that often leads to a decrease in stomach acid production and/or malabsorption within the GI. Finally, bacterial overgrowth and parasites could lead to disruption of the GI system and to B12 deficiencies.

Other nutrients have been helpful in people dealing with neuropathies such as Vitamin C, Curcumin, Vitamin B6, Vitamin B1, and Capsaicin. Before starting any aggressive protocol, you need to consult a qualified healthcare practitioner, as there could be contraindications due to health reason. A practitioner should perform a thorough history and any laboratory work to determine the root cause. As nutrition and supplementation are beneficial, it is important to understand that they may still cover up the cause even though you may feel better.

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