

Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyradiculoneuropathy (CIDP)

What is CIDP?

CIDP is a disorder that damages peripheral nerves. These nerves branch out from your spinal cord and go to your arms and legs.

There are two types of peripheral nerves:

- Motor nerves. These nerves carry signals from your brain to your muscles. These signals move the muscles in your arms and legs.
- Sensory nerves. These nerves carry signals from the skin and muscles to your brain. These signals let you feel heat, cold, touch and pain.

CIDP causes damage to part of the peripheral nerve called the myelin sheath. The myelin sheath wraps around and protects nerve fibres.

- Damage to the peripheral nerves causes muscle weakness in your arms and legs (the same on both sides of the body) and impaired sensation (feeling) in your arms and legs. You may experience tingling or numbness beginning in your fingers and toes. You also may be less able to feel heat, cold, touch and pain.

CIDP may develop any time after birth and slowly worsens over time. There is no cure for CIDP, but treatment can help you manage the symptoms.

CIDP stands for Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyradiculoneuropathy (CIDP)

Here's what these words mean:

Chronic	=	Long-term, lasting for more than 8 weeks
Inflammatory	=	Damage caused by inflammation
Demyelinating	=	Myelin sheath covering nerves breaks down
Polyradiculoneuropathy	=	Multiple nerves in arms and legs affected

What are the symptoms of CIDP?

The symptoms of CIDP include:

- Weakness in many muscles in your arms and legs (both sides of the body are affected equally)
- Reflexes reduced or not present
- Difficulty walking or lifting objects
- Impaired sensation in your arms and legs (less able to feel heat, cold, touch and pain)
- Tingling or numbness in your fingers and toes

Symptoms slowly worsen over a time period of at least two months.

What causes CIDP?

The cause of CIDP is not entirely known. There are no factors that have been identified that may increase someone's chance of developing CIDP. It is likely caused by an autoimmune process where the body's immune system (which typically is helpful and fights against infection) attacks its own healthy tissue.

CIDP is not genetic, which means it is not passed on from parents to offspring. It is acquired, which means it occurs spontaneously and at any point in someone's life, after birth.

How do you know I have CIDP?

Your doctor or specialist can tell if you have CIDP from:

- Talking to you about your symptoms
- A physical exam to see how well your muscles and nerves are working
- Reviewing the results of tests

Tests for CIDP include:

- Nerve conduction studies and Electromyography. These tests measure the electrical activity in your muscles and nerves. Knowing how fast your nerves send signals to your muscles can help determine if you have CIDP.
- Lumbar puncture. This test, which involves taking a small sample of fluid from a space between your spine in your lower back, looks for high levels of protein which can help determine if you have CIDP.

How is CIDP treated?

CIDP cannot be cured, however medications and supportive treatment can help you move and cope with symptoms. This includes intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg) therapy, physiotherapy and Prednisone. You will work closely with the health care team to make a treatment plan that meets your needs.

Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIg) Therapy

- IVIg is an infusion of “good” antibodies (proteins) through an IV line that is generally tolerated well. It can help increase your overall strength and help you to function better.
- IVIg therapy must be given at the hospital, and repeated every 2 to 6 weeks.

Physiotherapy

- A Physiotherapist can design a program of exercises and stretches to suit your needs.
- Exercise can strengthen your legs, improve your ability to walk, build endurance, and improve your posture and balance. Exercise also benefits your heart and overall health. Low impact exercise is best, such as biking or swimming. These activities do not put stress on your muscles and joints.

If started early, physiotherapy can delay or reduce nerve damage and muscle weakness.

Prednisone

- Prednisone is a steroid medication used to treat many autoimmune conditions. It can help increase your overall strength and help you to function better.

**If you have questions about CIDP or your care,
please speak with your health care team
at the Neuromuscular Clinic.**

905-521-7933