

Drug Treatment for Diabetic Pain

The term for diabetic-associated pain is *peripheral neuropathy*. This is a condition of pain and numbness of the nerves in the hands and feet. Diabetes is a common cause of peripheral neuropathy. More than 3 million Americans with diabetes experience neuropathic pain. Signs and symptoms may include tingling or burning sensations, sensitivity to touch, and muscle weakness. Because sensations may be decreased, persons with diabetes are advised to check their feet regularly to identify any minor injuries that could lead to serious infections if the injury is not noticed.

A variety of types of medications are available for the treatment of diabetic-associated pain, however not all are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Duloxetine (*Cymbalta*), a selective serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor, and pregabalin (*Lyrica*), an anticonvulsant, are medications approved specifically for treating diabetic peripheral neuropathic pain. Other anticonvulsant medications, such as carbamazepine (*Tegretol*) and gabapentin (*Neurontin*) may be prescribed. Different types of antidepressants also may be prescribed. A lidocaine patch (*Lidoderm*), a topical anesthetic, also may be applied to the skin in the area of most severe pain.