



PODIATRY  
MACKAY

## Peripheral Neuropathy and your feet

### What is it?

Peripheral Neuropathy (PN) refers to damage to the Peripheral Nervous System (PNS), i.e., the nerves that transmit signals from your brain and spinal cord to your extremities. This damage distorts these signals and results in reduced sensation in your feet and lower limbs. As the PNS is a complex interwoven system, the symptoms of Peripheral Neuropathy can be varied however the most common presenting complaints are; numbness, tingling, burning, aching and muscle weakness of the extremities.

### Why Did I get it?

Peripheral Neuropathy can have many causes and can be inherited or acquired. Below is a list of the most common:

- Diabetes (Most common cause)
- Physical trauma (e.g. car accident)
- Side-effect of medication
- Alcoholism
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Genetic disorders

### Symptoms:

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy usually first appears in the feet and legs and may occur in the hands and arms later. A common symptom of diabetic peripheral neuropathy is **numbness**. Sometimes you may be unable to feel your feet while walking. Other times, your hands or feet will tingle or burn.

### How is it diagnosed?

During your initial consultation at Queensland Orthotics and Podiatry, the following neurological assessment will be undertaken to ascertain:

- Quality of Reflexes
- Ability to detect vibration
- Ability to detect objects under your feet

Testing is conducted in various locations around your lower limbs and feet. This will determine the exact location of peripheral nerve damage.

### How can Peripheral neuropathy effect the feet?

Altered sensation underneath your feet predisposes you to several issues. For example: If you placed a rock in the shoe of an individual with no sensation, they would not be able to feel it. This will eventually cause a wound and may potentially lead to lower limb amputation.

### How we can we help:

- Conduct regular neurological assessments (frequency is dependent on your risk status)
- Improve your overall foot health to reduce potential risk factors. E.g. Corns/callous
- Footwear advice – Recommend footwear for your foot type.
- Provide education on supplements and analgesic medications i.e Zostrix and Vitamin B12
- Correct biomechanical issues that could increase your level of risk.
- Treat wounds/ulcers if they do begin to occur.