
I have CRPS

I have Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), also known as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome (RSD).

- Physicians do not know why it develops or what causes it, but CRPS is a nerve disorder that usually occurs after a traumatic injury, surgery, sprain, fracture, or a period of immobilization. The principal symptom is pain dramatically disproportionate to the injury.
- More than 140 years ago Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell, a Union Army surgeon, first described the excruciating pain that we know as CRPS.
- CRPS can lead to disability. CRPS can spread.
- I may look “healthy,” but I often suffer unbearable, unrelenting, and burning nerve pain. The McGill Pain Scale rates the pain of people with CRPS higher than that of people with cancer.
- My skin may swell, sweat, change colors, change temperature, or hurt to the slightest touch.
- Often it is difficult for me to sleep so I may have trouble with attention and concentration.
- I may be taking powerful medications prescribed by my physician with many side effects that may affect how I feel or how I react.
- It is often hard to move easily or keep my body steady.
- Chronic pain, like that caused by CRPS, often leads to depression because we undergo significant, and often negative, life changes.
- I have good and bad days; my pain may even change hourly. Stress increases my pain.
- Presently, there is no cure for CRPS. I always have hope because of the support of my family and friends and ongoing research.

Here's How You Can Help Me.

- My pain is real even though it is invisible and may not be readily apparent in my demeanor or activities.
- I am learning various coping mechanisms to get through the day, but the chronic pain is always there. I have good and bad days; my pain may even change hourly, and I cannot predict how I will feel each day.
- Sometimes it hurts to be touched anywhere so please ask before you touch me.
- It is OK to ask me about CRPS.
Better yet, visit www.rsds.org and learn all you can.

Pain Scale



The RSDSA provides support, education and hope to everyone affected by the pain and disability of CRPS/RSD while we drive research to develop better treatment and a cure.

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