

# I have CRPS

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

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.

## What is CRPS?

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- 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 150 year 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.

## Here's How You Can Help Us

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- 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.

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It is OK to ask me about CRPS.

Better yet, visit [www.rdsd.org](http://www.rdsd.org) and learn all you can.

CRPS/RSD is a diagnostic consideration for individuals who have pain (moderate to severe) that is disproportionate to any inciting event (sprain, fracture, etc.) and has some of the following characteristics:

- Pain is described as deep, aching, cold, burning, and/or increased skin sensitivity
- The presence of an initiating noxious event (sprain, fracture, etc.)
- Continuing pain (moderate to severe) associated with allodynia, or hyperalgesia.
- The pain is disproportionate to any inciting event.
- Abnormal swelling in the affected part
- Abnormal hair or nail growth
- Abnormal skin color changes
- Abnormal skin temperature (greater than 1° C asymmetry)
- Abnormal Sweating
- Limited range of movement, weakness, or other motor disorders (Paralysis, dystonia, etc.)
- CRPS I/RSD is excluded by the existence of conditions that would otherwise account for the degree of pain and dysfunction

## Pain Scale



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**rsdsa**  
SUPPORTING THE  
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