

## COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME SYMPTOMS



These are some of the symptoms of CRPS. Few people will have all of these symptoms. For a diagnosis of CRPS you need to have 3 symptoms and 2 signs in 4 different categories in the [Budapest Criteria](#).

These do not include the signs and symptoms of the complications of CRPS, which may develop over time.

- **Pain** that is disproportionate in severity to the inciting event. The character of the pain can be burning, freezing, deep, aching, throbbing, stabbing or tingling. The pain is aggravated by movement of the affected extremity.
- **Hyperesthesia** (exaggerated physical sensitivity) Feeling pain from pressure or temperature on the affected area that wouldn't normally be painful.
- **Allodynia** (pain to non-painful stimuli) A painful response to your bedsheets, or to being touched, a breeze on your skin, the shower etc.
- **Hypoesthesia** (a reduced sense of touch or numbness) is described in about 70% of patients and is most often present in a glove-like or stocking-like distribution.
- **Abnormal skin temperature** (a difference between the affected and unaffected limb). At onset the affected limb is warmer in two thirds of cases and colder in one third. Many patients have a warmer limb at onset and go on to having a colder limb as the disease progresses.
- **Abnormal skin colour** the skin may appear red/purple and mottled in appearance. Permanent skin discolouration may occur later resulting in brown-gray, scaly pigmentation.
- **Oedema** is common in the early phase of the disease but may not be present in very long-term patients. Persistent oedema is caused by infection of the atrophied soft tissues.
- **Abnormal sweating** is a sign of autonomic dysfunction. About 50% of patients have hyperhidrosis.
- **Range of motion** is often limited
- **Tremor** of the affected limb.
- **Difficulty or inability in using** the affected extremity

- **Neglect-like symptoms** this includes cognitive neglect, in which the limb may feel foreign, or bigger or smaller than the opposite limb, and motor neglect, in which directed mental and visual attention are needed to move the limb.
- **Some impairment of motor** including paralysis, pseudo paralysis (voluntarily restricting movement because of pain), or clumsiness.
- **Joint swelling and stiffness**
- **Atrophy** of the soft tissues, muscles, and bones can also occur.
- **Muscle weakness**
- **Dystonia** of the affected foot or hand.
- **Muscle spasms**
- **Abnormal Hair Growth** either a loss of hair growth in the affected area or excessive hair growth – which is a sign of sympathetic dysfunction
- **Altered nail growth** is also a sign of sympathetic dysfunction. Your nails may become brittle or grooved.
- **Insomnia** difficulty sleeping.
- **Rapid fatigability**
- **Osteoporosis** small patches of fragile bones
- **Skin infections & ulcers**
- **Muscle contractures**

It is common for someone with CRPS to suffer from anxiety & depression due to the changes to the limbic system in the brain.

Please speak to your GP if you are experiencing feelings of depression or self-harm.

Alternatively please phone:

**Lifeline: 13 11 14**

**Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636**