

Information for Patients about RSD/CRPS

<http://www.neurologychannel.com/patient-information-rsd/index.shtml>

Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD), also called complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) or causalgia, is a chronic, progressive nerve disorder. Patients who have RSD/CRPS experience severe pain and other symptoms (e.g., changes in skin temperature, color, or sensitivity, swelling), often with no known cause. In some cases, the disorder develops following an injury. RSD/CRPS usually affects the arms, legs, hands, and feet, but it can occur in any part of the body.

RSD/CRPS can be difficult to diagnose and the course of the disorder often is unpredictable. Symptoms of reflex sympathetic dystrophy/complex regional pain syndrome may worsen over time and can be disabling.

It is important for patients with RSD/CRPS to work with their health care team to develop an effective treatment plan. Here are some questions to ask your doctor (e.g., neurologist, pain management specialist) about RSD/CRPS. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and take it with you to your doctor appointment. The more knowledge you have about RSD/CRPS, the easier it is to make important decisions that can help reduce your pain and other symptoms.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about RSD/CRPS

- What is RSD/CRPS?
- Why do you suspect that I have reflex sympathetic dystrophy/complex regional pain syndrome?
- What other conditions might be causing my symptoms?
- Which diagnostic tests will be performed to determine if I have RSD/CRPS and to rule out other causes for my symptoms?
- What do these tests involve?
- How should I prepare for these diagnostic tests and procedures?
- Should I see a doctor who specializes in RSD/CRPS? Why or why not?
- What type of RSD/CRPS do I have? Is my condition classified as type I or type II?
- Might lifestyle changes help reduce my symptoms? If so, what modifications do you recommend?
- What treatment(s) do you recommend to reduce my RSD/CRPS symptoms?

- Why do you recommend these treatments?
- What are the possible benefits, risks, and complications of treatment?
- Do you recommend physical therapy? Why or why not?
- Will medication be used to treat my RSD/CRPS? If so, which medications?
- How will these medicines be administered?
- What are the common side effects of these medications? What should I do if I develop severe side effects? **Telephone number to call:**
- If my symptoms continue to worsen in spite of treatment, what other treatment options are available?
- Might I require surgery to treat my RSD/CRPS? Why or why not?
- What does surgery to treat reflex sympathetic dystrophy/complex regional pain syndrome involve?
- Are there any clinical trials available for patients with RSD/CRPS? If so, do you recommend that I participate in a clinical trial? Why or why not?
- Can you recommend a local or online support group for patients, family members, and caregivers?
- Can you recommend additional resources for information about RSD/CRPS?

Notes/Additional Information