

MEDICAL



Mohammed J. Zafar, M.D.

Q: My aunt has diabetes and has been bothered by numbness, pain and tingling in her feet. I am concerned about nerve damage and wonder what she can do to stop this from progressing?

A: Over time, some people with diabetes may develop loss of feeling, tingling, pain, burning or pins-and-needle sensations in the limbs (especially the legs, feet and hands). This type of

nerve involvement is called peripheral neuropathy assuming other conditions have been excluded. Other symptoms described are weakness and loss of balance.

These symptoms are more common in those who have difficulty controlling their blood sugar, and especially when associated with high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, and regular alcohol use. Diabetes can also be an underlying cause of carpal tunnel syndrome. Nerve involvement can occur at any time, but the risk increases with longer duration of diabetes.

The key to prevention is maintaining tight control of the blood sugar at normal or near-normal levels. Hopefully, this will help reduce the symptoms of neuropathy provided other causes have been ruled out. Several prescription medications are available to relieve diabetic nerve pain.

To help prevent complications, people with neuropathy need to examine their hands, feet and legs every day (look for and prevent injury such as cuts and bruises), take care of their nails regularly and wear properly fitted, comfortable shoes.

Please visit www.kalamazoonervecenter.com for more information.

Kalamazoo Nerve Center, PLLC

2750 Old Centre Rd. Ste. 145 • Portage

269.323.0955 • www.kalamazoonervecenter.com