

## Pudendal Neuropathy (PN)

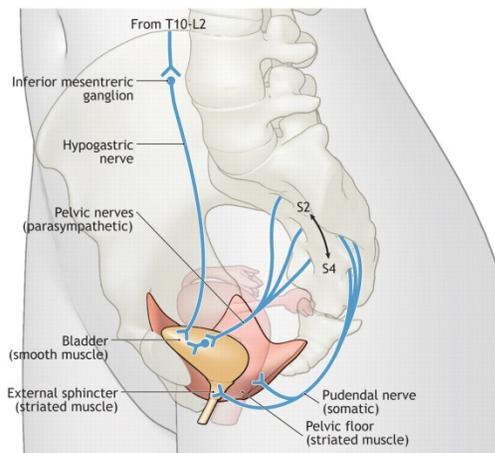
The **pudendal nerve** carries sensations to/from the external genitals, the lower rectum, and the perineum (between the genitals and the anus). There is a pudendal nerve on each side of the pelvis. **Neuropathy** is disease of or damage to a nerve. So, **pudendal neuropathy** is a nerve problem in the rectal and genital region.

**Symptoms** Some people have mostly rectal pain, sometimes with defecation problems. Others have mostly pain in the genitals. The symptoms may include stabbing, twisting or burning pain, pins and needles, numbness or hypersensitivity. The nerve can affect bladder, bowel, and sexual function. Bladder irritation and vulvar pain are common. Painful intercourse, orgasm, and ejaculation can occur in many different combinations. Usually the symptoms are made worse by sitting, and better by either standing or lying down.

### Causes of PN

Damage to the pudendal nerve can occur suddenly as a result of trauma, such as surgery in the pelvic region, falls, bicycle accidents or childbirth; and sometimes even from severe constipation. It can also occur from sustained trauma over time, such as from bicycle riding or aggressive weightlifting that strains the pelvic muscles. It can be caused by diseases such as diabetes or multiple sclerosis.

Trauma may cause stretching or compression of the nerve directly, or by causing fibrosis which can pinch the nerve. PN is often associated with pelvic floor dysfunction.



### Treatment

*Nerve blocks* to stop the pain. These often have to be repeated to achieve long-term relief. These are injections, sometimes done with an X-ray, and can include a numbing agent (lidocaine), a steroid, botulinum toxin, or alcohol.

*Pelvic floor physical therapy* is a non-surgical procedure done by a physical therapist. The therapist applies pressure and stretching techniques to the pelvic floor muscles. She also trains the patient to control the pelvic floor muscles. This reduces the muscle strain in the area around the pudendal nerve

*Surgery* to decompress the nerve has a 60-70% success rate, but is not an option for all patients

For more information on Pudendal Neuropathy visit:

[www.pelvicpain.org](http://www.pelvicpain.org)

[www.pudendalhope.info](http://www.pudendalhope.info)