

Phantom Pain

You may experience sensations or pain in the limb that is no longer there. This is often referred to as phantom sensations or phantom limb pain. If the experience is uncomfortable, speak to your physician about treatment options.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHANTOM SENSATIONS AND PHANTOM PAIN?

Phantom sensations generally aren't painful. These have been described as "pins and needles," itching, or tingling.

Phantom pain is when the feelings are more intense and uncomfortable — cramping or aching, stabbing, burning, or electric shock-like sensations. The intensity can vary and change over time.



WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT PHANTOM SENSATIONS AND PHANTOM PAIN?

First, keep track of when the sensations or pain occurs to try to identify anything triggering it. If you cannot identify or eliminate the triggers, try taking your mind off them to help reduce your discomfort. Here are some suggestions:

- Move around
- Massage or touch your residual limb
- Play a game
- Listen to music
- Watch a video
- Talk with a friend or loved one
- Do something creative
- Apply hot or cold packs (only if you are able to use these safely)



SHOULD I SEE MY DOCTOR ABOUT PHANTOM SENSATIONS OR PAIN?

Yes. Managing phantom sensations and pain is important. Your doctor may prescribe different treatments. Massage, acupuncture, and stretching have been helpful for many. Some people experience relief with the help of a small battery-powered device called a TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) unit, which delivers electrical impulses through the skin surface. Additionally, pain medication may be considered. Your physician will develop a treatment plan that's right for you.

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

It is not recommended to treat your phantom sensations or pain on your own. It is important to work with your physician to make sure any treatment is safe and effective.

To learn more tips and techniques to help manage phantom pain, scan the code or visit hclinic.info/Blog-PhantomPain.



For more resources on adjusting to life with limb loss, scan the code or visit HangerClinic.com/LimbLoss.

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