

PATIENT-PROVIDER RELATIONSHIP KEY TO PAIN MANAGEMENT | HEALING FOODS FOR CHRONIC PAIN

# PAINNEWS

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SUMMER 2015

## NERVE DAMAGE AND PAIN

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## SWIMMING

THE SUMMER EXERCISE  
FOR CHRONIC PAIN



# NERVE DAMAGE & PAIN

*Before jumping into the treatments available to those suffering from nerve pain, it's important patients understand how nerves work and what can happen when they become damaged. The nervous system is responsible for a number of bodily functions, and depending on the type, nerves generally control movement, breathing, digestion and sensation.*

## **There are three types of nerves found in the body:**

### **AUTONOMIC NERVES**

These nerves control involuntary and voluntary functions within the body, like your heart rate, blood pressure, temperature regulation and digestion.

### **MOTOR NERVES**

These nerves control movement. They send signals from your brain through your spinal cord to your muscles to make certain motions and react to other, often alarming, movements.

### **SENSORY NERVES**

These nerves control sensation by relaying information from your skin, through your muscles, to your brain. These nerves allow you to feel temperature and pain.

Nerve damage can occur from a traumatic injury, surgery or health problem like cancer, diabetes or an infectious disease. Symptoms of nerve damage generally include pain, sensitivity to touch, numbness and tingling. However, these may be better or worse depending on the type of nerve that's been damaged.

If your motor nerves have been damaged, you may experience muscle atrophy, spasms, partial or full paralysis, immobility and muscle weakness.

If your autonomic nerves have been damaged, you may experience excessive sweating, lightheadedness, dry eyes and mouth, or bowel and bladder dysfunction.

### **TREATMENT FOR NERVE PAIN**

Unfortunately there is no cure for nerve damage, but there are ways to reduce pain symptoms. Treatment depends on the type and cause of nerve damage, but prescription pain medications, antidepressants and anticonvulsants are commonly prescribed to manage and alleviate pain. Therapeutic nerve blocks or injections may be administered to treat neuropathic pain that is affecting specific areas that have been properly identified. Apart from some of the minimally invasive options, your Southwest Spine and Pain Center physician may recommend an implantable device, like a spinal cord stimulator to provide significant pain relief. Talk to your pain management specialist today about ways to manage chronic nerve pain from nerve damage.



# S W I M M I N G

## THE SUMMER EXERCISE FOR CHRONIC PAIN

*Swimming is a low-impact exercise that gets everyone moving – including those suffering from chronic pain. Studies have found swimming has psychological and physical benefits for chronic pain sufferers too, so instead of staying indoors all summer to stay cool, consider putting on your bathing suit and going for a swim!*

### PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

Psychological disorders like anxiety or depression often accompany individuals with chronic pain. Swimming has many great benefits because it is a form of exercise. Physical activity causes the brain to release endorphins, which are responsible for reducing perceptions of pain and making you happy. In addition, swimming is an exercise the whole family can enjoy. It may benefit your psychological health more when you're surrounded by people who support you by

participating. Swimming can also help you get your mind off of other day-to-day stresses.

### PHYSICAL BENEFITS

In addition to the possibility of temporarily relieving stress and anxiety associated with chronic pain, swimming may also help reduce chronic pain. When you swim, the water supports your body, so less pressure is put on your joints. While someone suffering from chronic pain may believe they are unable to exercise due to their condition, living a sedentary lifestyle is generally worse because it promotes weight gain that puts more stress on your joints.

Your physician at Southwest Spine and Pain Center can recommend ways to exercise in the pool that will help ease your pain, depending on its severity and location. Exercises that may be suggested range from

doing simple stretches to designing a swim workout routine. Stretching in the pool can also be a great way to fight muscle tension. Because the water provides some resistance, swimming can strengthen your muscles so they can do a better job of supporting your body.



### IMPORTANT POOL TIP

Before diving into the pool this summer, consider the water temperature. Pay attention to how your body reacts in hot or cold temperatures. Swimming in cold water may help those with inflammation or swelling, while swimming in hot water, which is used in hydrotherapy for chronic pain patients, may help reduce soreness or aching pains. Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what water temperature you feel most comfortable exercising in.



## YOU'LL NEED...

- Three stalks of kale, beet greens, or Swiss chard
- 1/2 avocado
- 1-2 stalks organic celery
- 1/2-1" ginger root
- 1/2-1" turmeric root
- 2-cups coconut, almond or skim milk

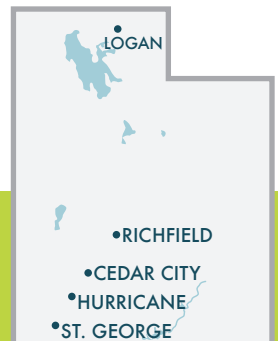
*\*Feel free to add bananas, strawberries or pineapples to sweeten the drink!*

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash everything, including the avocado skin before you cut it open.
2. Chop large items into smaller chunks if your blender requires it.
3. Remove ribs on the greens if present.
4. Add all ingredients to the blender.
5. Add enough liquid to cover all of the veggies.
6. Blend 30 seconds. Check consistency. Adjust liquid if needed. Blend more if needed.

## HURRICANE LOCATION NOW OPEN!

**HURRICANE**  
 25 N. 2000 W. Suite 8  
 Hurricane, UT 84737  
 t: 435.635.0174  
 f: 435.635.0631



# SOUTHWEST

SPINE & PAIN CENTER

435.656.2424 | SouthWestSpineandPain.com

**ST. GEORGE**  
 652 S. Medical Center Dr. #110  
 St. George, Utah 84790  
 t: 435.656.2424  
 f: 435.656.2828

**CEDAR CITY**  
 1303 N. Main St.  
 Cedar City, Utah 84721  
 t: 435.586.2229  
 f: 435.586.2022

**RICHFIELD**  
 70 E. 1000 N. Suite 2C  
 Richfield, Utah 84701  
 t: 435.586.2229  
 f: 435.586.2022

**LOGAN**  
 550 E. 1400 N. Suites X & Y  
 Logan, Utah 84341  
 t: 435.787.8146  
 f: 435.787.8149