



Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyradiculoneuropathy (CIDP)

Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyradiculoneuropathy (it's really difficult to say so we just call it CIDP) is a rare autoimmune condition that affects the peripheral nervous system (the nerves outside of your brain and spinal cord), causing weakness, numbness, and sometimes pain, mainly in the arms and legs. Symptoms tend to get progressively worse without treatment.

Imagine your nerves are like wires transmitting messages from your brain to the rest of your body. In CIDP, the immune system mistakenly attacks the protective covering of these nerves (called myelin) disrupting the signal.

This results in various symptoms such as difficulty walking, problems with balance, and even trouble with fine motor skills like writing or doing up a shirt.

The cause of CIDP isn't fully understood, but it seems to be linked to an immune response, where the body's immune system (your body's defence against infection and disease) tries to fight off an infection, and instead attacks your own nerves by mistake.

Diagnosing CIDP can be difficult as its symptoms can be the same as those of other conditions. Doctors typically rely on a combination of medical history, physical examination, and nerve tests to make a diagnosis. A Neurologist is very likely to be involved in both diagnosis and ongoing treatment. Treatment often involves IVIG (intravenous immunoglobulin) therapy, plasma exchange, or steroids to slow down or stop the immune system's attack on the nerves.

Everyone's CIDP journey is different, but ongoing treatment and physiotherapy means that many people with CIDP go on to live full lives. With CIDP, specialists talk about remission (the reduction or disappearance of the signs and symptoms of a disease) rather than cure, and while CIDP will change your life, it doesn't mean that people can't live fulfilling lives. You may however need long term treatment to manage symptoms and impacts effectively. You may also need emotional support to cope with the change to your life and the long term impact of CIDP.

CIDP can be life changing and have long term impacts. GAIN is here to support people and families impacted by CIDP, offering information, advice, and guidance; providing practical support where it is needed; funding and undertaking research; and raising awareness. If you want to know more about CIDP then reach out to us, we are more than happy to support.

