

## MANAGING A PAIN FLARE-UP

- **ICE/HEAT PACKS:** SOME PEOPLE FIND RELIEF WITH ICE PACKS OR HOT PACKS (E.G., WARM BEAN BAGS), BUT BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO BURN OR FREEZE THE SKIN IF YOU HAVE FACIAL NUMBNESS.
- **COMPOUND CREAMS:** ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT COMPOUNDED CREAMS CONTAINING LIDOCAINE, KETAMINE, OR BACLOFEN.
- **REST:** TRY TO REDUCE STRESS AND GET ADEQUATE REST, AS FATIGUE CAN WORSEN NERVE PAIN.

## LIVING WITH NEURALGIA (SUPPORT)

- **KEEP A DIARY:** RECORD THE FREQUENCY, INTENSITY, AND TRIGGERS OF YOUR PAIN, AS WELL AS ANY SIDE EFFECTS OF MEDICATIONS.
- **SUPPORT GROUPS:** CONNECT WITH ORGANISATIONS LIKE THE TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA ASSOCIATION (TNA) FOR SUPPORT AND INFORMATION.
- **MENTAL HEALTH:** SEEK SUPPORT FOR THE EMOTIONAL STRAIN, AS SEVERE PAIN CAN LEAD TO DEPRESSION AND LOW MOOD

### WHEN TO SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL HELP

*IF THE PAIN IS CONSTANT RATHER THAN EPISODIC.*

*IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO EAT OR DRINK, LEADING TO WEIGHT LOSS OR DEHYDRATION.*

*IF YOU EXPERIENCE, OR ARE EXPERIENCING, SUICIDAL THOUGHTS.*

## Where to Find Help

BRITISH BRAIN AND SPINE FOUNDATION [WWW.BRAINANDSPINE.ORG.UK](http://WWW.BRAINANDSPINE.ORG.UK)  
7 WINCHESTER HOUSE, CRANMER ROAD, KENNINGTON PARK, LONDON SW9 6EJ.  
HELPLINE 0808 808 1000

FACIAL NEURALGIA RESOURCES [HTTP://FACIAL-NEURALGIA.ORG](http://FACIAL-NEURALGIA.ORG)  
AN AMERICAN ORGANISATION WITH INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET.

THE TMJ ASSOCIATION LTD. [WWW.TMJ.ORG](http://WWW.TMJ.ORG)  
AN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION WEBSITE ABOUT TMJ DISORDERS

**THE PAIN RELIEF FOUNDATION IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENT OF ANY INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ANOTHER ORGANISATION AND DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY PRODUCT OR SERVICE MENTIONED OR ADVISED BY ANY OTHER ORGANISATION.**

**ALL BOOKLETS ARE WRITTEN BY THE STAFF OF THE PAIN RELIEF FOUNDATION AND ENDORSED BY THE WALTON CENTRE PAIN TEAM, WALTON CENTER FOR NEUROLOGY & NEUROSURGERY, LOWER LANE, LIVERPOOL, L9 7LJ, UK .**  
[WWW.THEWALTONCENTRE.NHS.UK](http://WWW.THEWALTONCENTRE.NHS.UK)



**PAIN RELIEF FOUNDATION**  
[www.painrelieffoundation.org.uk](http://www.painrelieffoundation.org.uk)

# FACIAL NEURALGIAS

FACIAL NEURALGIA, MOST COMMONLY PRESENTING AS TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA, IS A CHRONIC CONDITION CAUSING SEVERE, ELECTRIC SHOCK-LIKE FACIAL PAIN. BECAUSE THIS PAIN IS CAUSED BY NERVE ISSUES, STANDARD PAINKILLERS LIKE PARACETAMOL OR IBUPROFEN ARE GENERALLY INEFFECTIVE

## MEDICAL MANAGEMENT (PRIMARY TREATMENT)

- **ANTICONVULSANTS:** THE FIRST-LINE TREATMENT IS TYPICALLY MEDICATIONS LIKE CARBAMAZEPINE (OR OXCARBAZEPINE), WHICH HELP CONTROL PAIN BY SLOWING NERVE IMPULSES.
- **CONSISTENCY IS KEY:** THESE MEDICATIONS MUST BE TAKEN REGULARLY, NOT JUST DURING AN ATTACK.
- **DOSAGE ADJUSTMENT:** IT IS CRUCIAL TO START WITH A LOW DOSE AND GRADUALLY INCREASE IT UNDER MEDICAL SUPERVISION TO AVOID SIDE EFFECTS LIKE DIZZINESS OR DROWSINESS.
- **SECOND-LINE OPTIONS:** IF CARBAMAZEPINE IS INEFFECTIVE OR CAUSES TOO MANY SIDE EFFECTS, DOCTORS MAY TRY GABAPENTIN, PREGABALIN, OR BACLOFEN.
- **REVIEW:** IF MEDICATIONS ARE INEFFECTIVE, DISCUSS SPECIALIST REFERRALS FOR SURGERY (E.G., MICROVASCULAR DECOMPRESSION) OR NERVE TREATMENTS.

## IDENTIFYING AND AVOIDING TRIGGERS

- COMMON TRIGGERS INCLUDE LIGHT TOUCH, COLD WIND, CHEWING, BRUSHING TEETH, OR SHAVING.
- PROTECT YOUR FACE: WEAR A SCARF OVER YOUR FACE IN COLD WEATHER.
- GENTLE HYGIENE: USE COTTON PADS TO CLEAN YOUR FACE RATHER THAN RUBBING. MODIFY EATING: EAT SOFTER FOODS AND DRINK LIQUIDS AT ROOM TEMPERATURE TO AVOID TRIGGERING A FLARE-UP.
- MOUTH CARE: USE A SOFT-BRISTLED TOOTHBRUSH AND USE LUKEWARM WATER FOR BRUSHING.
- TOPICAL RELIEF: A MOUTHWASH CONTAINING A LOCAL ANESTHETIC CAN PROVIDE RELIEF.