

Pins and needles

Pins and needles feels like pricking, tingling or numbness on the skin.

It happens when the blood supply to the nerves is cut off. This is usually when you sit or sleep on part of your body. Everyone can get pins and needles. It lasts only a few minutes.

You often get pins and needles in your:

- arms
- hands
- legs
- feet

It usually stops when the weight is taken off the body part and your blood supply returns to the nerves.

Talk to your GP if:

- you constantly have pins and needles
- it keeps coming back
- it lasts a long time

Possible causes of pins and needles

Pins and needles can be a symptom of certain conditions such as:

- [Raynaud's](#) - you have pins and needles in your fingers or toes that change colour
- hyperventilation - you are breathing too quickly and have trembling hands and pins and needles
- [sciatica](#) - you have pins and needles and pain that travels from your back, down your leg to your foot
- multiple sclerosis - you have pins and needles in different parts of your body
- [diabetes](#) - you have pins and needles, pain or numbness in your hands and feet

Having pins and needles does not mean you have a serious condition. Pins and needles is usually nothing to worry about, but talk to your GP if you're worried.

Long-lasting pins and needles may also be caused by:

- treatments - such as chemotherapy
- some medicines - such as HIV medicine, medicine to prevent seizures, or some antibiotics
- toxic substances - such as lead or radiation
- poor diet
- nerve damage - after an injury or illness
- [drinking too much alcohol](#)

Treatment for pins and needles

If you have temporary pins and needles, you can ease the symptoms by taking the pressure off the affected area.

If you have chronic pins and needles, the treatment will depend on what has caused it. For example, if it's caused by diabetes, treatment will focus on controlling your blood glucose levels.

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