



Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association

I Have CRPS

- **I have Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), also known as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome (RSD).**
- Physicians do not know why it develops or what causes it, but CRPS is a nerve disorder that usually occurs after a traumatic injury, surgery, sprain, fracture, or a period of immobilization. The principal symptom is pain dramatically disproportionate to the injury.
- More than 140 years ago Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell, a Union Army surgeon, first described the excruciating pain that we know as CRPS.
- CRPS can lead to disability.
- I may look “healthy,” but I often suffer unbearable, unrelenting, and burning nerve pain. The McGill Pain Scale rates the pain of people with CRPS higher than that of people with cancer.
- My skin may swell, sweat, change colors, change temperature, or hurt to the slightest touch.
- CRPS can spread.
- Often it is difficult for me to sleep so I may have trouble with attention and concentration.
- I am frequently following a prescribed medication regimen that usually involves powerful drugs with many side effects that may affect my alertness or attentiveness.
- It is often hard to move easily or keep my body steady.
- Chronic pain, like that caused by CRPS, often leads to depression because we undergo significant, and often negative, life changes.
- I have good and bad days; even hours. Stress increases my pain.
- Presently, there is no cure for CRPS. I always have hope because of the support of my family and friends and ongoing research.

Here's How You Can Help Me.

- Please believe that the pain is real even though it is invisible and may not be readily apparent in my demeanor or activities.
- I am learning various coping mechanisms to get through the day, but the chronic pain is always there. I have good and bad days; even hours, and I cannot predict how I will feel each day.
- Sometimes it hurts to be touched anywhere so please ask before you touch me.
- It is OK to ask me about CRPS. Better yet, visit www.rsds.org and learn all you can.



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