



Brachial Plexus Injury

Brachial plexus injuries are caused by excessive stretching, tearing, or other trauma to a network of nerves from the spine to the shoulder, arm, and hand. Symptoms may include a limp or paralyzed arm, loss of muscle control in the arm, hand, or wrist, and lack of feeling or sensation in the arm or hand. Injuries often occur secondary to vehicular accidents, sports injuries, gunshot wounds, or surgeries; many brachial plexus injuries happen during birth, if the baby's shoulders become impacted during the birth process causing the brachial plexus nerves to stretch or tear.

Some brachial plexus injuries may heal without treatment. Many children improve or recover by 3 to 4 months of age. Treatment for brachial plexus injuries includes occupational or physical therapy and, in some cases, surgery. The site and type of brachial plexus injury determine the prognosis. For avulsion (tears) and rupture injuries there is no potential for recovery unless surgical reconnection is made in a timely manner. For neuroma (scarring) and neuropraxia (stretching) injuries the potential for recovery is more encouraging. Most patients with neuropraxia injuries recover spontaneously with a 90-100 percent return of function.

The major area of concern to the people with brachial plexus injuries is often management of pain, which can be chronic and extreme, and which does not generally respond well to many painkillers.

According to the United Brachial Plexus Network, obstetrical injuries of this sort need not be reported to the Centers for Disease Control; therefore, many cases are incorrectly diagnosed or referred to as Erb's Palsy.

Sources: United Brachial Plexus Network, Brachial Plexus Palsy Foundation, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Web Sites

United Brachial Plexus Network

www.ubpn.org
32 William Road
Reading, MA 01867

Phone: 781-315-6161

Email: info@ubpn.org

UBPN provides information, support and leadership for families and those concerned with brachial plexus injuries worldwide. Features an online registry, publications and informational materials to increase awareness of the disorder and to educate medical and legal professionals.

Healthy Children: Brachial Plexus Injuries in Children

<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/pages/brachial-plexus-injuries-in-children.aspx>

Mayo Clinic: Brachial Plexus Injury Overview

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/brachial-plexus-injury/home/ovc-20127336>

MedlinePlus: Brachial Plexus Injuries

<https://medlineplus.gov/brachialplexusinjuries.html>

Merck Manual Home edition: Plexus Disorders

<http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/brain-spinal-cord-and-nerve-disorders/peripheral-nerve-disorders/plexus-disorders>

NINDS: Brachial Plexus Information Pages

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Brachial-Plexus-Injuries-Information-Page>

Texas Children's Hospital Brachial Plexus Program

<https://www.texaschildrens.org/departments/brachial-plexus-program>

University of Washington at St. Louis: Brachial Plexus Injury

http://nerve.wustl.edu/nd_brachial.php?np=nerve_disorders

Peripheral nerve transplantation/repair is another phrase to research.

The information contained in this message is presented for the purpose of educating and informing you about paralysis and its effects. Nothing contained in this message should be construed nor is intended to be used for medical diagnosis or treatment. It should not be used in place of the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider. Should you have any health care related questions, please call or see your physician or other qualified health care provider promptly. Always consult with your physician or other qualified health care provider before embarking on a new treatment, diet or fitness program. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this message.

This publication is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$10,000,000 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.