

Phantom Limb Pain

Phantom limb was first described in 1551 by a French military surgeon named Ambrose Pare. The term "phantom limb" was coined by a civil war surgeon named Silas Weir Mitchell.

Patients who have had a body part amputated will sometimes have the feeling that their body part is still present. This "phantom limb" sensation is present in almost all patients after amputation. In many of these patients this sensation can be painful and debilitating. This is a form of central pain, or pain arising from the brain and spinal cord. Patients with a phantom limb can often describe the limb with specific details. In some patients, the feeling will decrease with time, but in a few cases this pain remains and is a constant stress and limiting factor in everyday life.

Risk Factors & Treatment of Phantom Limb Pain

There are several risk factors which can predispose patients to developing phantom limb pain. They include pain in the affected limb prior to amputation, a poorly fitting limb prosthesis or persistent pain in the remaining stump as a result of neuromas (abnormal growth of damaged nerve endings).

Treatment of the phantom limb pain can be discussed with your pain specialist. Some of the methods of treatment can involve different classes of medications, nerve blocks, mirror therapy, physical therapy, and in some instances spinal cord stimulation.

Our highly trained pain physicians care about improving your pain and quality of life. For more information on how Pain Specialists of Orange County can help treat your Phantom Limb Pain, please contact us at 949-297-3838.