



Trigeminal neuralgia (TN) is a neuropathic disorder of the trigeminal nerve that causes episodes of intense pain in the eyes, lips, nose, scalp, forehead, and jaw. It is estimated that 1 in 15,000 people suffer from trigeminal neuralgia, although those numbers may be significantly higher due to frequent misdiagnosis. TN usually develops after the age of 50, more commonly in females, for reasons we can not explain, although there have been cases with patients being as young as three years of age.

The pain of trigeminal neuralgia is often falsely attributed to a pathology of dental origin. Patients often visit surgeons having many removed teeth on the affected side of their mouth. Extractions do not help. The pain originates in the ganglions and not in the individual nerve of a tooth. Because of this difficulty, many patients may go untreated for long periods of time before a correct diagnosis is made.

Patients diagnosed with TN are often in total agony. The painful attacks are said to feel like stabbing electric shocks, burning, pressing, crushing or shooting pain. Affected areas on the face can be so sensitive that touching or even air currents can trigger an episode of pain. Individual attacks affect one side of the face at a time, last several seconds, hours or even longer, and repeat up to hundreds of times throughout the day. TN can have severe effects on lifestyle as simple things such as eating, talking, shaving, and brushing your teeth can be painful.

TN pain tends to occur in cycles with complete remissions lasting months or even years. 10-12% of cases occur on both sides. Pain attacks will typically worsen in frequency or severity over time. A great deal of patients develop the pain in one branch, then over years the pain will travel through the other nerve branches.

Many dentists misdiagnose patients and begin removing teeth. This often happens to patients under the age of 30 because misinformed dentists believe that patients must be much older to begin experiencing TN. Please [contact us](#) for an evaluation if you are experiencing episodes of shooting pain.

