Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP)

What is CIDP?
CIDP is an autoimmune condition that can cause arm and leg weakness. An autoimmune condition is where the body's immune system attacks a specific part of the body. In this case, the immune system attacks nerves in the arms and legs.

- **Chronic** means slow and long lasting. Signs of CIDP may occur slowly and over a long period of time. Without treatment, problems can continue for months to years.
- **Inflammatory** refers to swelling. Under normal conditions, your nerves are not swollen.
- Nerves are covered by a substance called myelin. Myelin acts like insulation and helps the nerves transmit messages to muscles. In CIDP, many nerves are **demyelinated**. This means that the myelin is disrupted.
- **Polyneuropathy** means many nerves.

Signs
Signs of CIDP may include:

- Muscle movement is decreased and weakness occurs when the myelin is disrupted
- Numbness and tingling in arms and legs

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Learn more about your health care.
• Decreased or absent reflexes in arms and legs
• Neck weakness
• Problems with:
  ➤ Swallowing
  ➤ Breathing
  ➤ Holding things such as a pencil and eating utensils
  ➤ Walking

It is common for problems related to CIDP to return, but the type and length of signs vary from person to person. Remember that you may not have all of the above signs.

**Diagnosis:**
Your doctor will order certain tests to find out if you have CIDP. Some of the tests include:
• Electromyography
• Nerve conduction test
• Blood tests
• Lumbar puncture
• Nerve biopsy

During your hospital stay, your doctor and nurse will perform many neurological exams. These include checking your mental status, muscle strength, and your ability to feel in your arms and legs. You also may have a Pulmonary Function Test. This will show if the muscles that help you breath are weak. If you have problems breathing, chewing or swallowing, it is very important to tell your doctor or nurse.

**Treatment:**
Although we do not know the cause of CIDP, there are ways to treat it. Your doctor may try different treatments to find one that is best for you.
Current treatments include:

- Plasma Exchange
- Medicines
- Rehabilitation

You can help with your recovery by taking these actions:

- Talk openly about your illness. This will help decrease your anxiety.
- Your body's immune system helps fight infection. If you are taking medicines that decrease your body's immune system, avoid close contact with people who have colds or other infections.
- Exercise in moderation.
- Take planned rest periods.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.