

What is Trigeminal Neuralgia?

Trigeminal Neuralgia (TN) is an extremely severe facial pain that tends to come and go unpredictably in sudden shock-line attacks. The pain is often described as stabbing, shooting, excruciating and very severe. Each stab lasts for a few seconds, but here can be many stabs in quick succession which can last for several minutes. There can be long periods of no pain between spasms and sometimes there may be months or years of no pain. A spasm is often triggered by touching the face.

The Trigeminal Nerve has 3 branches or divisions:

- The upper branch (Ophthalmic) which runs above and through the eye, the forehead and front of the head.
- The middle branch (Maxillary) which runs through the cheek, upper jaw, teeth, gums and side of the nose.
- The lower branch (Mandibular) which runs through the lower jaw, teeth and gums.

It is more common in women than in men and usually affects people over 50 years old, although many cases have been reported in young adults, and very rarely among children.

What Causes Trigeminal Neuralgia?

It is caused by damage to the protective outer covering of the nerve, often as a result of pressure from blood vessels. (An MRI scan is usually arranged in order to make sure there isn't any other cause.)

This damage causes the nerve to malfunction and send messages of intense pain to the brain in response to a light touch on a 'trigger' area of the face.

If you have TN, you already know that over-the-counter analgesics such as Ibuprofen or paracetamol, even in great quantities, have very little or no effect on TN pain.

However, there are various medical and surgical treatments available for TN. The usual process is to start with medication, most commonly anticonvulsants, originally developed to treat epilepsy. If these fail to control the pain or give you too many side effects there are several surgical options that can be considered.

Where Can You Get Help?

The Trigeminal Neuralgia Association UK is a support group for people suffering from this severely painful neurological condition.

The aim of the TNA UK is to offer support and encouragement to TN patients, their families and friends, and our information pack has details about the medical and surgical treatments available. It also contains information about the drugs used to control the pain and details of any advances being made in the management of this excruciatingly painful and debilitating condition.

Our telephone and email support services give patients the chance to talk to someone who understands and we can put you in touch with other patients in your area who know exactly what you are going through.

For more information, please contact us at:

Trigeminal Neuralgia Association UK
PO Box 234
Oxted Surrey
RH8 8BE
Tel: 01883 370214

www.tna.org.uk

Please send me more information about trigeminal neuralgia and details of how to become a member of the [Trigeminal Neuralgia Association UK](#):

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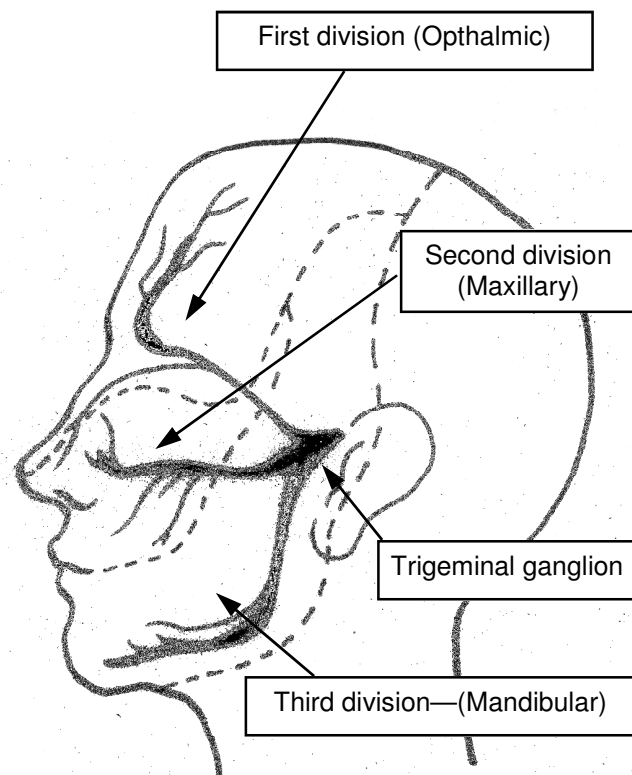
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Please enclose a large stamped addressed envelope and post to:

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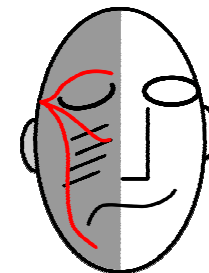
Diagram showing the Trigeminal Nerve and the three divisions



All information leaflets issued by the Trigeminal Neuralgia Association UK have been endorsed by the Association's Medical Adviser

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Facing pain together



Trigeminal Neuralgia

*Information and support
for patients*

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