



DENTAL PROTOCOLS

**CRPS (previously known as RSD) Dental Guidelines.
Handle with Sensitivity!**

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), formerly known as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), is a condition marked by a combination of neuro-inflammatory processes disrupting the normal functioning of the nervous and immune systems. This disruption leads to a constant transmission of pain signals to the brain. CRPS is characterized by excruciating burning pain, along with pathological changes in the bones and skin, excessive perspiration, tissue swelling, and heightened sensitivity to tactile stimulation. On the McGill Pain Scale, CRPS is ranked higher in intensity compared to childbirth, amputation, and cancer pain. Individuals with CRPS exhibit an extraordinary sensitivity to specific stimuli such as touch, movement, vibrations, noise, light, and needle pricks.

Tips for Patients:

- It is advisable to carry a copy of the WARRIORS of CRPS Dental Protocols, along with a "CRPS Medical Alert" card. This helps validate your condition and provides educational information to healthcare practitioners.
- When visiting your dentist, provide them with the following:
 - A printed copy of your comprehensive medical history, starting from the initial onset of CRPS, including details about the triggering event.
 - Information about the treatments you have undergone for CRPS and the names of the healthcare professionals who have been involved in your care.
 - Make a list of any known allergies you have, as well as a complete record of your current medications, including prescribed drugs, over-the-counter medications, and any specialty compounded medications you may be taking (including dosage and frequency).
 - If applicable, provide a list of any Active Implantable Medical Devices (AIMD) you have, such as spinal cord stimulators (SCS), pain pumps, cardiac pacemakers, defibrillators, stents, or monitoring devices.
 - Mention any implants you have received, such as breast implants, cochlear implants (ear), intra-ocular lens implants (eye), heart valves, contraceptive devices, prosthetics, and so on.
 - If you have undergone any organ transplants, it is essential to include this information as well.
- Research dental practices that specialize in treating patients with chronic pain conditions. The American Dental Association can provide information about practitioners who are willing to learn about and understand CRPS.
- When educating your dental team, it is essential to be patient and provide them with the necessary information. This includes your dentist, dentist anesthesiologist, periodontist, orthodontist, dental assistant/hygienist, and lab technician.

- To safeguard your dental health and overall well-being, start with a comprehensive dental evaluation to establish a tailored treatment plan that suits your needs as a CRPS patient.
- Communicate any dental and oral health concerns you may have, such as allergies or sensitivities to dental products or ingredients.
- Discuss any issues you experience, such as burning mouth, dry mouth, erosion, dental decay, chronic mouth inflammation/irritation, orthodontic considerations, or muscle problems affecting the head, neck, jaw, tongue, or salivary glands.
- Collaborate with your dental practitioner to develop a daily oral hygiene plan specifically designed for you. This plan may include recommendations on the type of toothbrush to use (e.g., soft bristle), the use of mouthwash or moisturizing spray, regular flossing, and adopting a dental-friendly diet while considering appropriate vitamin supplements approved by your doctor.

Tips for Medical Professionals:

- Understand that CRPS is a legitimate medical condition that requires support, education, and a comprehensive plan of action to minimize further pain.
- Recognize that CRPS involves both sensory and autonomic dysfunction, resulting in central sensitization of pain. This manifests as hyperalgesia (increased sensitivity to pain) and allodynia (pain triggered by non-painful stimuli).
- Consider anesthesia options such as topical anesthesia or numbing gel before injections, cleanings, or X-rays.
- For longer dental appointments or procedures like root canal treatments that may exacerbate CRPS symptoms, moderate sedation or general anesthesia could be considered.
- Employ extreme gentleness when using dental equipment (e.g., spit suction, drill, water spray, dental toothpick) to minimize pain.
- Hypoallergenic materials may be beneficial for patients with sensitivities.
- Bright lights can act as triggers for patients, so providing sunglasses may help alleviate discomfort.
- Adjust the room temperature according to the patient's needs.
- Avoid placing the patient in the path of vented air from HVAC systems or fans.
- Refrain from applying ice to the CRPS-affected area to prevent further nerve damage.
- Take precautions to prevent anything from bumping into the patient.
- Patient positioning is crucial for positive outcomes, so consider using bolsters, pillows, gel support, and blankets for support and comfort.
- Noise from monitors, dental equipment, diagnostics, voices, phones, TV, intercom, etc., can intensify pain, so minimizing noise levels may be helpful.
- Shorter treatment sessions may help minimize CRPS flares.
- Assess for limited range of motion (ROM) and weakness to assist patients in and out of the dental chair.
- Evaluate the need for adaptive oral hygiene devices for the patient.
- Abnormal sweating patterns (hyperhidrosis) may require adjusting environmental room controls, such as using a fan, but avoid placing the patient directly in its path.
- Be aware of hair/nail changes and swelling as potential indicators of CRPS.
- Consider the presence of movement disorders, such as motor spasms and involuntary muscle movements (bradykinesia, dystonia, myoclonus, excessive startle, and tremor) when planning dental treatment. Bite blocks, patient positioning, sedation, or general anesthesia may be helpful in managing these disorders.

- Be mindful of dysesthesia (creepy, crawly sensation to touch) and avoid contact with affected CRPS sites.
- If possible and more comfortable for the patient, provide dental treatment while the patient is standing or sitting.
- Prior to any dental procedure, consider pre-medication and develop an additional pain management plan, which may include the use of Ketamine (IV, troche), Nitrous Oxide, oral medications, or topical anesthesia (numbing gel) to minimize exacerbations.
- Maintain access to emergency equipment and ensure relevant certifications are up to date.
- Keep in mind that many CRPS patients may have secondary conditions such as POTS, MCAS, and EDS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, Mast Cell Activation Syndrome, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome).



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