

# CRPS Victims Are Suffering Physically, Financially After Medical Malpractice

**CRPS**, or Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, is what was formerly known as **RSD**. CRPS is a pain disorder and considered to be permanent, or as medical professionals often refer to it: “chronic”. There are several ways a person can develop Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. CRPS can develop because of medical malpractice such as a surgical error or can be sustained from an accident. Regardless of how they developed the condition, it’s considered to be one of the most excruciating, permanent afflictions a person can suffer from.

CRPS is difficult to treat and can be easily misdiagnosed as other nerve-related diseases such as MS (Multiple Sclerosis). That’s why it’s important, firstly, to fully understand this highly “complex” pain condition. Later in this article, we’ll explain a victim’s rights after sustaining this lifelong affliction due to medical malpractice or medical negligence.

## What is Complex Regional Pain Syndrome?

**Complex Regional Pain Syndrome** is a serious pain condition that in most cases affects a single limb. This can be a hand, foot, arm, or leg. In extreme cases, more than one limb is affected and the severities may vary from patient to patient. Complex Regional Pain Syndrome usually occurs after a victim sustains an injury such as a motorcycle accident, a motor vehicle accident, or any other injury that can damage the peripheral and central nervous systems. These “other” injuries can be caused by surgical error, which would fall under medical malpractice and/or medical negligence.

When the peripheral or central nervous systems are damaged, and a person can no longer function as they once did, they are at-risk for lifelong physical, emotional, and financial pain and suffering.

For those diagnosed with CRPS, the classification of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome that affects them will be one of two types: **CRPS-I** or **CRPS-II**. Without a confirmed diagnosis of specific nerve injury made by a medical professional (a neurologist is preferable) victims suffering from this pain are said to have CRPS-I. This type of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome was formerly known as RSD, or Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome.

When there is a diagnosed injury associated with the victim’s pain, they are said to have CRPS-II. CRPS-II was previously referred to as Causalgia. Research into continuing to classify Complex Regional Pain Syndrome into two types is ongoing and a decision has not yet been made to eliminate these classifications.

## CRPS symptoms: hiding in plain sight

The most obvious but misunderstood symptom of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome is, well, pain! Chronic, unbearable pain, to be exact. Patients often describe this near-constant pain as “pins and needles” or a “burning sensation” in the affected extremity. A definitive diagnosis of CRPS-I or CRPS-II is not commonly made on the spot. It takes a team of well educated doctors to fully understand the scope of the patient’s symptoms, and then make the connection of those symptoms to CRPS rather than MS or another nerve-related disease.

So, what are the symptoms that those suffering from CRPS often experience?

- Change of ability to move the affected limb
- Abnormal temperature in the affected limb or the surrounding area
- Stiffness in the affected limb
- Changes in skin texture (of the affected limb only)

- Problems in coordination, muscle movement

## **What went wrong? A closer look at the causes of CRPS, the toll taken on victims**

What causes Complex regional Pain Syndrome, specifically? Statistics show that over 90% of those afflicted by this sinister disease have sustained clearly recognized trauma to the affected area. The other 10% or so of sufferers sustain CRPS secondary to other pain-related illnesses such as Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, Marfan Syndrome, as well as other inherited genetic mutations that cause any number of defects in the body's ability to make and sustain connective tissue. The latter reasons for CRPS are extremely rare and are not generally seen outside of specific cases diagnosed by a doctor of genetics, known as a geneticist.

When a patient undergoes surgery on an extremity and the surgeon is negligent or careless, the patient may awaken to something beyond the expected post-surgical pain. Medical malpractice-related CRPS is more common than most people think. When a surgeon performs an operation, they must be aware of the nerves and the outcome of damaging those nerves if the surgical procedure is not performed with utmost care.

CRPS can take a heavy toll on its victims. Lifelong pain can cause those suffering from this condition to become unable to work. When a victim of this condition can no longer work, they're at-risk for financial distress. Medical care for complex pain conditions can be extremely limited or too expensive for someone who is out of work to readily afford. When medical bills add up and a victim continues to suffer due to lack of financial options, this adds insult to injury. Mental anguish with CRPS is common; being unable to find a cure for constant, burning pain can take a serious emotional toll.

## **Medical malpractice and CRPS: did the doctor cause me to suffer this lifelong pain?**

Of course, every surgeon should be diligent with every procedure performed on every one of their patients. When a surgeon chooses to rush through an operation or acts in a manner that's considered careless, there are grounds for a patient whom they injure to file a medical malpractice lawsuit. An experienced attorney can advise a patient on whether or not their CRPS-related injury is able to be tried in a court of law.

Occasionally, Complex Regional Pain Syndrome is a recognized complication of certain surgical procedures. If this is the case and the patient has been made aware of the risk and chose to pursue the surgery because it may be medically necessary and/or life-sustaining, then medical malpractice cannot be said to have occurred. If, however, CRPS was not a known risk of the surgical procedure and it can be proven that due to the surgeon's negligence in performing the operation the patient sustained this condition as a result, then there may be grounds for obtaining compensation.

## **Looking ahead: diagnosis, treatment, prognosis**

In Part II of our CRPS series, we'll take you behind doctor's doors and tell you everything you need to know about the diagnosis, treatment, and ultimately the prognosis of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. Through our extensive research, we can provide victims and their families the information insurance companies attempt to hide, causing them further pain and suffering.

## **The Shaked Law Blog: the whole truth and nothing but the truth**

Here on the Shaked Law Blog, we're telling the whole truth about everything the insurance companies won't! Our informative articles are here to help victims, families obtain the justice and compensation they deserve while they're offered factual, attorney-vetted advice that can help them recover from their injuries more successfully.

Contact us to schedule a complimentary consultation. There's no obligation. Take the first step and call today: (877). 529-0080

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