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Glossopharyngeal Neuralgia

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). *Glossopharyngeal Neuralgia Information Page*.

Glossopharyngeal neuralgia (GN) is a rare pain syndrome that affects the glossopharyngeal nerve (the ninth cranial nerve that lies deep within the neck) and causes sharp, stabbing pulses of pain in the back of the throat and tongue, the tonsils, and the middle ear. The excruciating pain of GN can last for a few seconds to a few minutes, and may return multiple times in a day or once every few weeks. Many individuals with GN relate the attacks of pain to specific trigger factors such as swallowing, drinking cold liquids, sneezing, coughing, talking, clearing the throat, and touching the gums or inside the mouth. GN can be caused by compression of the glossopharyngeal nerve, but in some cases, no cause is evident. Like trigeminal neuralgia, it is associated with multiple sclerosis. GN primarily affects the elderly.