Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Low-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (LIFU) for Peripheral Neuropathy

This information explains what LIFU is and how it works. It also explains what to expect if you have a LIFU treatment to help manage peripheral neuropathy (peh-RIH-feh-rul noor-AH-puh-thee).

Peripheral neuropathy is changes that happen when your peripheral nerves are damaged. Peripheral nerves are all the nerves outside your brain and spinal cord.

Peripheral neuropathy most often affects the nerves in your hands, fingers, feet, and toes. It can lead to symptoms such as pain, numbness, tingling, coldness, and weakness. To learn more, read *About Peripheral Neuropathy* (www.mskcc.org/pe/about-peripheral-neuropathy).

What is LIFU?

LIFU is a treatment that helps limit nerve pain and heal nerve damage. It can help you need less pain medicine.

LIFU is called “low-intensity” because it uses ultrasound waves (sound waves) with less energy than other types of ultrasound therapy.

LIFU is a non-invasive treatment. That means it doesn’t break your skin or go inside your body.

How does LIFU work?

Your healthcare provider will put a device that gives off ultrasound waves over the painful area. The ultrasound waves make a gentle vibration. The vibration stimulates the damaged nerves and encourages them to repair and grow back.

LIFU treatment can take a few minutes to an hour, depending on the area being treated. Most people have less pain right away after their treatment.

You can have up to 6 LIFU treatments. The treatments will be 1 week apart.

Does LIFU have any side effects?

Most people don’t have side effects from LIFU treatment. Some people may have mild swelling, redness, or discomfort in the treated area. These side effects usually go away within a few hours.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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