After surgery, it is natural that patients have pain to a certain extent. However, did you know that some patients continue to have pain for a longer time, continuing even after the expected healing time? This can last for months or even years, and might be experienced as stabbing pain or shooting pain localized to the part of the body where the patient had a surgery in the past. This chronic pain after surgery is called **postoperative neuropathic pain (PONP)**. Doctors might have a difficult time diagnosing PONP in case it is not directly linked to a specific surgery in the past. Therefore patients actively need to tell their doctor if they had a surgery and now have chronic pain in the affected area.

**WHAT IS POSTOPERATIVE NEUROPATHIC PAIN?**
Postoperative neuropathic pain (PONP) is chronic pain after surgery (postoperative). Although most patients will have some pain after surgery, which is normal, that pain should last for a short time (acute postoperative pain). In some cases, it can last long after the surgery, sometimes for months or even years. This is called **chronic (long-lasting) postoperative pain**.

**WHAT CAUSES POSTOPERATIVE NEUROPATHIC PAIN?**
Postoperative neuropathic pain (PONP) can develop if nerves were damaged during a surgery. Damaged nerves cannot correctly transmit signals from various parts of the body to the brain. Instead, these signals become exaggerated, causing chronic pain that may persist for months or even years. Around 10% to 50% of patients will develop PONP after a surgery, and that variability depends on the type of surgery.

**WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL POSTOPERATIVE NEUROPATHIC PAIN SYMPTOMS?**
The signs and symptoms of PONP are generally limited or localized to the area of the body where the surgery or incision took place. This is why PONP is often referred to as a type of **localized neuropathic pain (LNP)**, or scar pain when it occurs right at the location of the scar. The chronic pain associated with PONP can be described as ‘stabbing pain’ or ‘shooting pain’. Patients with PONP could be either very sensitive to touch (hypo- or hypersensitive) or insensitive to touch (hypo-sensitive). Although less common, some patients can experience itching or numbness.

**WHAT CAN PATIENTS DO?**
It is important to get active. Do you have symptoms that you would describe as ‘shooting pain’ or ‘stabbing pain’? If you have chronic pain after surgery, and think that it might be postoperative neuropathic pain (PONP), please describe your pain accurately via the ‘my pain questionnaire’ on [www.mypainfeelslike.com](http://www.mypainfeelslike.com) and see your doctor.