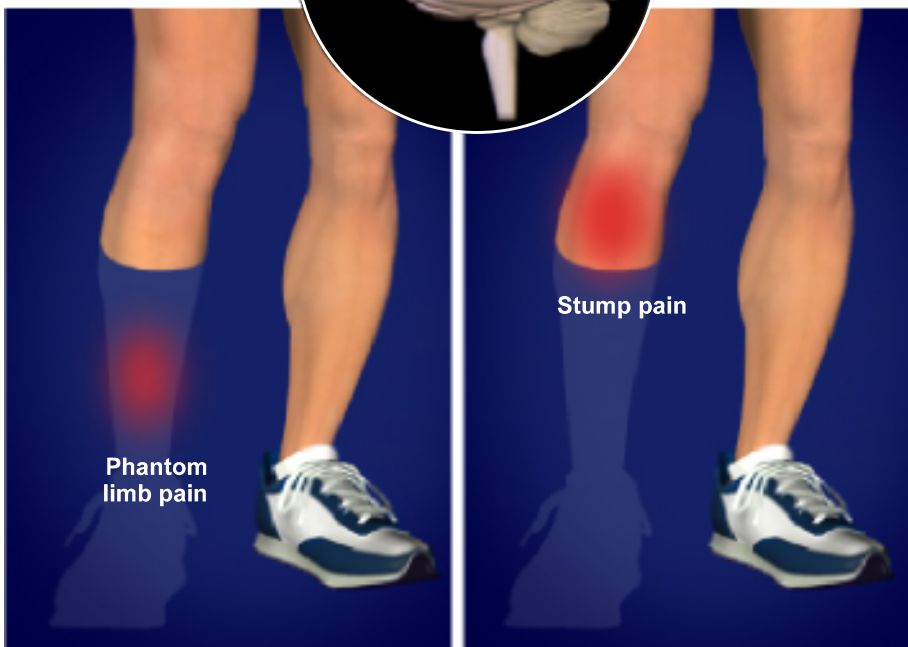


PHANTOM LIMB PAIN



May be caused by reorganization of neural pathways



Phantom limb pain

Stump pain

This condition, common among amputees, is a painful sensation that seems to originate in a missing limb. It is different from stump pain, which is pain in the stump of an amputated limb generally caused by overuse or a poorly-fitting prosthesis.

Why It Occurs

Although this condition is not fully understood, scientists believe that it may be caused by a reorganization of the neural pathways inside the brain following an amputation. Some believe that conditions such as gangrene or infection in the limb before the amputation may lead to an increased risk of phantom limb pain.

Symptoms

People with phantom limb pain can feel sensations ranging from mild discomfort to extreme pain in the missing limb. They may feel hot, cold, itching, squeezing, burning, aching or crushing sensations. The missing limb may also feel distorted or shortened.

Treatment

Treatments can include medications, spinal cord stimulation, use of a specialized prosthetic limb, and visual and thought exercises."