Peripheral neuropathy is the term used to represent a variety of diseases affecting the nerves leaving the spinal cord and entering the limbs. The most common pattern of injury involves degeneration of the most distant portions of the nerves causing a glove and stocking loss of sensation and strength. Painful burning, cold sensation or shock-like pain may occur. Occasionally, nerves involved in organ function may also be involved causing a variety of symptoms including lightheadedness, excessive or too little sweating, dry mouth and constipation. Extreme forms of neuropathy may cause weakness of the muscles about the shoulders and pelvis causing problems with standing or raising arms above the head. There are a variety of causes for neuropathy including episodic increases in blood sugar or early diabetes, endocrine abnormalities such as hypothyroidism, certain vitamin deficiencies or immune system abnormalities. Peripheral neuropathy is diagnosed by a combination of neurological examination and evaluation of nerve health through electrical testing called electromyography or “EMG”. Neuropathy may be treated through identification and management of the underlying cause and there are several different types of medications useful for reducing pain. Neuromuscular disease specialists at the University of Washington Medical Center excel in the diagnosis and management of these conditions.