

A dermatome is an area of skin that is mainly supplied by a single spinal nerve.

There are 8 cervical nerves (C1 being an exception with no dermatome), 12 thoracic nerves, 5 lumbar nerves and 5 sacral nerves. Each of these nerves relays sensation (including pain) from a particular region of skin to the brain.

A dermatome also refers to the part of an embryonic somite.

Along the thorax and abdomen the dermatomes are like a stack of discs forming a human, each supplied by a different spinal nerve. Along the arms and the legs, the pattern is different: the dermatomes run longitudinally along the limbs. Although the general pattern is similar in all people, the precise areas of innervation are as unique to an individual as fingerprints.

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