

**NAME: YONREN NITA ORITSESEUNDEDE**

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## **SOMATOSENSORY PATHWAYS**

Somatosensory Pathways, the term somatosensory refers to bodily sensations of touch, pain, temperature, vibration, and proprioception (limb or joint position sense). The posterior column-medial lemniscal pathway conveys proprioception, vibration sense, and fine, discriminative touch. The anterolateral (or ventrolateral) pathways, include the spinothalamic tract and other associated tracts, convey pain, temperature sense, and crude touch. Since some aspects of touch sensation are carried by both pathways, touch sensation is not eliminated completely in isolated lesions to either pathway. There are 4 types of sensory neuron fibers which are classified according to axon diameter. These

different fiber types have specialized peripheral receptors that subserve different sensory modalities. Larger-diameter, myelinated axons conduct faster than smaller-diameter or unmyelinated axons. From largest to smallest diameter and conduction velocity, there are called A-alpha, A-beta, A-gamma, and unmyelinated C's. They are detailed below along with their diameter, receptor type, and the sensory modality they serve.