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[\[USA\] Itch-specific Neurons Identified In Mice Offers Hope For Better Treatments / Science Daily 2009-08-08](#)

[i]ScienceDaily[/i] (Aug. 8, 2009) — Historically, many scientists have regarded itching as just a less intense version of pain. They have spent decades searching for itch-specific nerve cells to explain how the brain perceives itch differently from pain, but none have been found.

Now researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have discovered that those itch-specific neurons do exist in mice, and their studies suggest that itch and pain signals are transmitted along different pathways in the spinal cord. Reporting in the Aug. 6 issue of Science Express, the advance online publication of the journal Science, the researchers say they can knock out an animal's itch response without affecting its ability to sense and attempt to avoid pain.

For the further information, please find the full-story page (<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/08/090806141514.htm>), or the reference provided.

Journal references:

1. Sun YG, Zhao ZQ, MengXL, Yin J, Liu XY, Chen ZF. Cellular basis of itch sensation. Science, Aug. 7, 2009
2. Sun YG, Chen ZF. A gastrin-releasing peptide receptor mediates the itch sensation in the spinal cord. Nature, Online July 25, 2007; (448), pp. 700-703. Aug. 9, 2007 DOI: 10.1038/nature06029

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