

# Morton's Neuroma

## What is a Morton's Neuroma?

A neuroma is a benign tumor of a nerve. Morton's neuroma is not actually a tumor, but a thickening of the tissue that surrounds the digital sensory nerve leading to the toes. It occurs as the nerve passes under the Deep Transverse Intermetatarsal ligament, a ligament connecting the bones in the ball of the foot. Morton's neuroma most frequently develops between the third and fourth toes, however it may also occur between other toes as well. It usually forms in response to irritation, trauma or excessive pressure.

## What are the symptoms of a Morton's Neuroma?

Altered sensation is the primary symptom. This may take the form of pain, numbness, burning, or tingling. The pain is usually located in the soft tissue on the underside of the ball of the foot, and may radiate into the toes or up into the foot. The pain is worsened with activity and may be relieved by sitting down and rubbing the area. There is occasionally a sensation of feeling as if a pebble is in your shoes or that your sock is balled up. The pain may be worsened by tighter shoes. Higher heels also aggravate the condition due to the increased stretching of the nerve over the ligament, because of the upward position of the toes.

## What is the treatment for a Morton's Neuroma?

Since hammer toes are by their nature a structural deformity. As a result, the treatment may be directed at relief of symptoms or to alleviate the problem of the structural deformity. Relieving the symptoms of the hammer toe is the main goal associated with conservative treatment. However, if the deformity is severe enough surgery may be required to provide the best correction as well as allowing conservative treatment to have the best chance of success.

## Treatment

Treatment depends on the severity of your symptoms. Most of the conservative treatment options focus on decreasing inflammation in the area of the nerve. This helps to minimize the symptoms and decreases the size of the Neuroma resulting in less progression of the condition.

## Conservative Treatment

- Resting your feet and shoe modifications.
- Anti-inflammatory medications, such as Ibuprofen, are useful. These are painkillers but also reduce inflammation and may work better than ordinary painkillers.
- A steroid (cortisone) injection is helpful to help relieve localized inflammation in the area of the nerve. It may relieve the pain for several weeks, or even cure the problem.
- Dehydrated alcohol injections are used to deaden the nerve. This injection has an affinity for nerve tissue and causes the nerve to stop firing permanently. This results in numbness in the area and is a trade off over pain.

## Surgical Treatment

Surgery may be considered in very difficult cases. This is usually only advised if the pain has not eased after the treatments listed above have been exhausted. Surgery consists of removal of the neuroma. Your doctor will discuss the surgical procedure and details if this treatment is necessary.

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