

Morton's Neuroma of the Foot

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What It Is, Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment



What Is Morton's Neuroma?

Morton's Neuroma is a painful condition involving the thickening of tissue around one of the nerves leading to the toes. It typically occurs between the third and fourth toes and can feel like stepping on a pebble or a fold in your sock.

Causes of Morton's Neuroma

Morton's Neuroma develops due to irritation or compression of the nerve. Common causes include:

1. **Tight or high-heeled shoes:** These can compress the forefoot and increase pressure on the nerves.
 2. **Repetitive stress:** Activities like running or high-impact sports.
 3. **Foot deformities:** Conditions such as flat feet, high arches, or bunions can increase the risk.
 4. **Trauma:** Injury to the foot may damage the nerves or lead to inflammation.
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Symptoms of Morton's Neuroma

Symptoms often start gradually and may worsen over time:

- **Burning pain** in the ball of the foot that may radiate into the toes.
- **Tingling or numbness** in the toes.
- **A feeling of a lump or pebble** in the shoe, though no visible swelling occurs.
- Pain that worsens with walking, standing, or wearing tight shoes.



Diagnosing Morton's Neuroma

Diagnosis typically involves:

- **Physical examination:** Palpation of the forefoot to locate pain.
- **Imaging tests:** Ultrasound or MRI to confirm the presence of a neuroma and rule out other conditions.



Treatment Options for Morton's Neuroma

1. Non-Surgical Treatments

- **Footwear modification:** Switching to wide-toed, low-heeled shoes with proper arch support.
- **Orthotic devices:** Custom shoe inserts to reduce pressure on the nerve.
- **Medications:** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to relieve pain and inflammation.
- **Corticosteroid injections:** To reduce inflammation around the nerve.
- **Physical therapy:** Exercises to strengthen foot muscles and improve flexibility.

2. Surgical Treatment

- Surgery may be recommended if conservative measures fail. The procedure involves removing the affected nerve or releasing the surrounding tissue.
- Recovery typically takes several weeks, and post-surgical numbness in the affected toes is common.

Preventing Morton's Neuroma

- Wear comfortable, supportive footwear that allows enough space for your toes.
- Avoid prolonged use of high heels or tight shoes.
- Use orthotics if you have foot deformities.
- Stretch and strengthen your foot muscles to reduce stress on the nerves.

WIDE TOE BOX



Conclusion

Morton's Neuroma can significantly impact your quality of life, but early diagnosis and treatment can help alleviate pain and prevent complications. If you experience persistent pain in the ball of your foot, consult a podiatrist for a thorough evaluation and personalized treatment plan.