

Plantar Fibroma of the Foot

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Plantar fibroma is a benign (non-cancerous) growth that develops in the plantar fascia, the thick band of tissue running along the bottom of the foot. While often small and painless at first, it can cause discomfort or interfere with daily activities as it grows. This article explores what plantar fibroma is, its causes, symptoms, and available treatments.

What Is Plantar Fibroma?

A plantar fibroma is a fibrous nodule that forms in the plantar fascia, usually in the arch of the foot. It is firm to the touch and can vary in size. While the condition is not life-threatening, it can lead to significant discomfort, especially when walking or standing for extended periods.

Plantar fibromatosis, or Ledderhose disease, is a related condition where multiple nodules form, often larger and more aggressive than a single fibroma.



Causes of Plantar Fibroma

The exact cause of plantar fibroma is not fully understood, but several factors may contribute:

1. Genetics:

- A family history of fibrotic disorders may increase the risk.



2. Trauma or Injury:

- Repeated stress or minor injuries to the foot may trigger nodule formation.

3. Underlying Conditions:

- Conditions like diabetes or other connective tissue disorders could predispose individuals to develop fibromas.

4. Medications:

- Certain medications, such as beta-blockers or anticonvulsants, have been associated with fibrotic conditions.

Symptoms of Plantar Fibroma

Common symptoms of plantar fibroma include:

1. Palpable Lump:

- A noticeable, firm lump in the arch of the foot, often less than an inch in diameter.

2. Pain or Discomfort:

- Pain when walking, standing, or wearing shoes that press against the nodule.

3. Reduced Flexibility:

- Stiffness or tightness in the arch of the foot, which may affect gait.

4. No Visible Changes to Skin:

- The overlying skin remains normal, without discoloration or inflammation.

Treatments for Plantar Fibroma

Treatment options for plantar fibroma depend on the size of the fibroma, severity of symptoms, and impact on daily activities. Both non-surgical and surgical approaches are available.

1. Non-Surgical Treatments:

- **Orthotics:**
 - Custom orthotic insoles can redistribute pressure and reduce discomfort caused by the fibroma.
- **Physical Therapy:**
 - Stretching exercises and massage can help alleviate tension in the plantar fascia.
- **Steroid Injections:**
 - Corticosteroid injections may temporarily reduce the size of the fibroma and relieve pain.

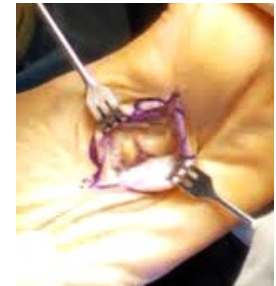


- **Topical Medications:**
 - Medications like verapamil gel may help soften the fibrous tissue over time.



2. Surgical Options:

- Surgery is considered when non-surgical treatments fail to provide relief. Options include:
 - **Excision of the Fibroma:**
 - Surgical removal of the fibroma, though there is a risk of recurrence or complications such as arch instability.
 - **Fasciotomy:**
 - Partial removal of the plantar fascia to relieve tension and prevent recurrence.



3. Alternative Treatments:



- **Shockwave Therapy:**
 - Low-energy shockwaves may help reduce pain and improve mobility.
- **Collagenase Injections:**
 - Enzyme injections to break down fibrous tissue, though these are still under investigation.



Preventing Plantar Fibroma

While it may not be possible to prevent plantar fibroma entirely, certain steps can reduce the risk:

1. **Foot Care:**
 - Maintain healthy foot hygiene and avoid prolonged stress on the arches.

2. **Supportive Footwear:**
 - Wear shoes with proper arch support and cushioning.
3. **Avoid Repetitive Trauma:**
 - Minimize activities that place excessive strain on the plantar fascia.
4. **Monitor for Early Signs:**
 - Seek medical advice if you notice lumps or experience unexplained foot pain.

When to See a Doctor

Consult a healthcare provider if you experience:

- Persistent pain or discomfort in the arch of your foot.
- A growing or painful lump that interferes with walking or standing.
- Symptoms that do not improve with conservative treatments.

Conclusion

Plantar fibroma is a manageable condition, but it can cause discomfort and affect quality of life if left untreated. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to minimizing symptoms and preventing complications. If you suspect you have a plantar fibroma, consult a healthcare professional to explore the best treatment options for your needs.