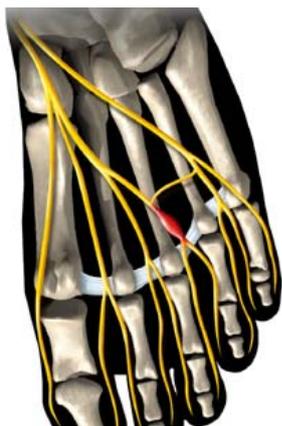




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## **Interdigital Neuroma**



Interdigital neuroma (Morton's neuroma) is the medical term for a painful growth in the nerve of the forefoot.

The pain is most commonly felt between the third and fourth toes but can also occur in the area between the second and third toes.

The exact cause of this problem is not clear

The symptoms seem to be caused by irritation of the nerve that runs in the space between each toe.

### **What part of the foot is involved?**

The nerves of the foot run into the forefoot and out to the toes between the long metatarsal bones of the feet.

Each nerve splits at the end of the metatarsal bone and continues out to the end of the toe. Each nerve ending supplies feeling to two different toes.

The interdigital neuroma occurs in the nerve just before it divides into the two branches, the area under the ball of the foot. A neuroma is formed by the swelling or thickening in this part of the nerve.

### **Why does the condition develop?**

Most likely, it results from repeated injury to the nerve in this area.

### **What does an interdigital neuroma feel like?**

The neuroma usually causes pain in the ball of the foot on weight bearing.

Many people with this condition report feeling a painful catching sensation while walking, and many report sharp pains that radiate out to the two toes where the nerve ends.

This can feel like electric shocks, similar to hitting the funny bone on your elbow.

MRI although not required routinely may show swelling of the nerve.

### **What can be done for my pain?**

#### **Nonsurgical Treatment**

Changes in shoe wear

A wider shoe will reduce or eliminate the symptoms.

An injection of lidocaine and cortisone into the area may help

## **Surgery**

If these nonsurgical measures fail to resolve the pain, surgery may be suggested. There are several different approaches to treating the neuroma surgically.

The more traditional procedure involves removing the neuroma. Since the neuroma is part of the nerve, the nerve is removed, or transected, as well. This results in permanent numbness in the area supplied by the nerve.

To remove a neuroma surgically, a small incision is made in the skin between the two toes that are affected by the neuroma. The neuroma is located and removed by cutting the nerve. The skin incision is repaired with stitches and a dressing applied.



## **What should I expect following treatment?**

You may require crutches for a few days after surgery.

The foot will remain tender for several days.

The stitches are generally removed in 10 to 14 days.

Either side of the toe will be numb after surgery.

Very rarely symptoms recur due to neuroma formation at the cut end of the nerve requiring further surgery.