

Morton's Neuroma: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

When your toes are squeezed together, often over a period of months or even years, the nerve that runs between the toes can swell and get thicker. This is called a Morton's neuroma. It may feel like a small lump is pushing inside the ball of your foot. When you walk or move your toes, you feel pain that sometimes moves into your toes. If the pressure continues, it may damage the nerve.

If you catch the problem early and change your shoes, the nerve swelling may go away. Your doctor may advise you to wear wide-toed shoes. He or she also may suggest that you ice the sore spot and limit activities that put pressure on the nerve. If these steps do not help your symptoms, your doctor may have you use special pads or devices that spread the toes. This keeps them from squeezing the nerve. In some cases, you may get a cortisone shot to reduce swelling and pain. If these treatments don't help, your doctor may suggest surgery to relieve pressure or remove the swollen nerve.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
- Try to stay off your feet as much as possible until the pain and swelling go away.
- Avoid wearing tight, pointy, or high-heeled shoes. Instead, wear roomy footwear.
- Put ice or a cold pack on the area for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Try massaging your feet. This relaxes the muscles around the nerve.
- If your doctor prescribed special pads or a device to relieve pressure on your toes, use these items as directed.
- Until all pain and swelling go away, avoid activities that put pressure on the toes. These include racquet sports and running.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

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