

Foot Notes

Oregon Foot Care Centers

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If you sometimes feel that you are "walking on a marble" and you have persistent pain in the ball of your foot, you may have a condition called Morton's neuroma.

What is a neuroma?

When a nerve swells after being compressed (or due to an injury) a neuroma is created. Sometimes labeled as a tumor, a neuroma is actually not a true tumor, but rather swelling in a nerve that can cause damage that is permanent.

The ball-of-the-foot is the most common location for this condition to occur. There are nerves between the toes at the end of the long bones of the foot (the metatarsal bones). It is at these junctures that nerves are often compressed, which leads to swelling that forms a neuroma.

Neuromas are sometimes the result of a cut or a wound that causes injury to a nerve. Other neuromas occur after surgery. This nerve condition can affect one foot or both feet. While neuromas are most commonly found between toes three and four, they have also been identified in other areas.

Is burning pain in my toe a sign of a neuroma?

Pain from a neuroma is often described as tingling or burning in one or two toes. The pain may be extreme at times, but is often not constant. You might find that massaging the ball-of-the-foot helps with the discomfort, and that any irritation of the nerve makes the pain worse. Swelling of the nerve may result in a popping feeling as you walk.

How does the doctor diagnose a neuroma?

There are other conditions such as stress fractures, arthritis, and inflamed tendons that have similar symptoms, so a complete exam and medical history are taken as part of the diagnostic process. An x-ray may be ordered to rule out a bone issue and imaging ultrasound may be used. During the physical examination of the foot, Dr. Gauntt is often able to feel the neuroma if one is present.

If a neuroma is found, how will it be treated?

There are several ways that a neuroma can be addressed. Orthotics are often prescribed to relieve pressure from the area of the neuroma, while injection therapy is another conservative method of treatment that may be utilized.

Dr. Gauntt may use cryosurgery, which utilizes gas that is under pressure to freeze the area of concern. This process has been used in the past to remove moles and warts. However, with more advanced technology now available, cryosurgery is being used to treat neuromas. The benefits include stopping the pain of a neuroma while allowing it to heal. You can return to your regular activities within a day or two, and the treatment is finished in about fifteen minutes.



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Recipe Corner

An all-time favorite sauce, great on ribs or chicken!

Sparerib Sauce

2 t. salt	6 small onions
1 t. pepper	2 cups ketchup
4 T. brown sugar	4 T. vinegar
1 t. dry mustard	1/2 cube butter
2 t. reg. mustard	4 T. Worcestershire sauce
3 cups chopped celery	juice of 1 lemon
3 cloves garlic (I add 6!)	

Finely chop onions and celery, sauté in pan with butter til soft. Add remaining ingredients. Cook for 30 min. or so on low.

I love to parboil ribs, put in a large casserole dish and top with sauce. Cover with foil and bake 300 degrees for an hour or so. Fantastic also with chicken. Makes a ton of sauce! Extra sauce is also great over rice!!



August is National Picnic Month

Don't waste a bit of this great summer weather, so many places in this great Northwest, grab your picnic gear and enjoy every minute of it!

