

# Neuroma

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A neuroma is a “pinched nerve” or a nerve tumor. It is a benign growth of nerve tissue usually between the third and fourth toes that causes pain, burning, tingling, or numbness between the toes and in the ball of the foot. The main symptom associated with a neuroma is pain between the toes while walking. Patient’s often find relief by stopping their walk, taking off their shoe, and rubbing the affected area. At times, the patient will describe the feeling as similar to having a pebble in his or her shoe or feeling like the sock is “bunched up” at the ball of the foot. This condition affects mostly women.

## Symptoms

- Tingling and numbness in the ball of the foot.
- Swelling between the toes and possibly toe spreading.
- Pain in the ball of the foot when weight is placed on it.

A number of factors can contribute to the formation of a neuroma.

- High-arched foot or flat foot. These foot types are unstable around the toe joints.
- Trauma.
- Improper footwear. Too narrow or heel height over 1.5” increases pressure on the forefoot.
- Repeated stress, common to many occupations.

## What Can You Do for Relief?

- Wear shoes with laces or buckles that allow for width adjustment.
- Wear shoes with thick, shock-absorbent soles and proper arch support.
- DON’T wear High heels.
- Use an ice pack to help to dull the pain and decrease inflammation.
- For simple, undeveloped neuromas, a metatarsal pad which lifts the metatarsals and relieves pressure allowing the condition to diminish on its own. For more severe conditions, however, podiatric medical treatment or surgery may be necessary to remove the tumor.

**Treatment by Your Podiatric Physician:** Treatment options vary with the severity of each neuroma, and identifying the neuroma early in its development is important to avoid surgical correction. Podiatric medical care should be sought at the first sign of pain or discomfort; if left untreated neuromas tend to get worse. The primary goal of most early treatment regimens is to relieve pressure on areas where a neuroma develops. Your podiatric physician will examine and likely X-ray the affected area and suggest a treatment plan that best suits your individual case.

**Padding and Taping:** Metatarsal pad placed at the ball of the foot may change the abnormal foot function and relieve the symptoms caused by the neuroma.

**Medication:** Anti-inflammatory drugs and cortisone shots to ease acute pain and inflammation.

**Orthotic Devices:** Custom shoe inserts made by your podiatrist may be useful in controlling foot function. An orthotic may reduce symptoms and prevent the neuroma from getting worse.

**Surgical Options:** When early treatments fail podiatric surgery may become necessary. The procedure, which removes the nerve, is outpatient, with a recovery time that is often just 3-4 weeks. Your podiatric physician will thoroughly describe the surgical procedures to be used and the results you can expect. Any pain following surgery is easily managed with medications prescribed by our podiatrist.

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