



Metatarsalgia

Metatarsalgia is a term that describes pain under the ball of your foot (metatarsal heads). This is a common issue that affects a wide variety of patients from high impact athletes to our aging population.

Symptoms:

- Gradual onset of pain with weight bearing activities.
- Large callouses under the foot.
- Swelling in the area of irritation
- A feeling that your sock is bunched up under the foot

Causes:

- Prominent metatarsal heads due to foot structure or deformity.
 - High foot arches
 - Hammertoes which push the metatarsal heads down causing more pressure under the ball of the foot
 - Prior fractures
- Loss of normal fat pad under the foot due to aging
- Tight Achilles tendon, if your calf muscles are too tight they pull the foot down causing increased stress through the forefoot.

Treatments:

- **Non-operative**
 - The initial treatment for metatarsalgia is to off-load or cushion the area. This can be achieved in multiple different ways.
 - Rest, Ice, NSAIDs (Ibuprofen, Naproxen)
 - Shoe inserts (over-the-counter inserts such as Spenco, Dr Scholl's, etc.)
 - Metatarsal pads (These pads sit **BEHIND** the metatarsal heads to relieve the pressure under the ball of the foot.)
 - Steroid injections are rarely used for metatarsalgia, but an anesthetic injection may be used to identify the cause of the metatarsalgia
- **Operative**
 - If non-operative management fails to provide relief, surgical intervention may be appropriate. Discuss with Dr. Feinblatt what your best surgical option is based on your history, clinical exam, x-rays, and level of physical demand.
 - Surgical procedures are outpatient and patients can typically walk on the foot the same day.

