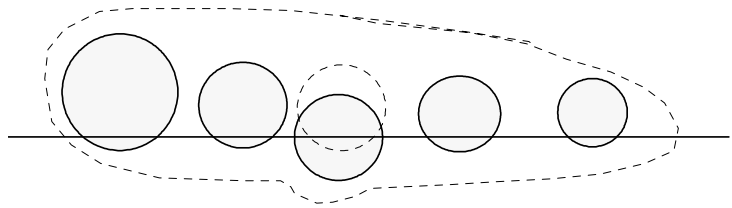
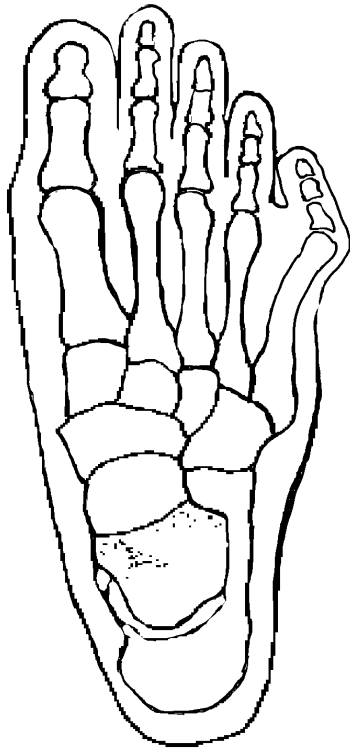




The Foot Surgery Centre – Total Foot Care Solutions

Management of Metatarsalgia



The metatarsal may be long or dropped, making it take more weight than adjacent metatarsals.

What is metatarsalgia?

You have been diagnosed with metatarsalgia. This is a general term to describe pain and overload of the joints in the ball of the foot, at the base of the toes. This term includes joint inflammation of various causes. Symptoms often include, throbbing pain, a feeling of walking on a lump or a pebble, hardskin or a corn under the joint/s and a feeling of warmth. The problem is often worse in thin soled or high-heeled shoe or when standing all day or walking a long distance. Sometimes the toes associated with the affected joints splay or start to float upwards. Causes include, inappropriate or short footwear, mechanical predisposition i.e. a long or dropped metatarsal, osteoarthritis, inflammatory arthritis or trauma.

How is the diagnosis made?

Clinical examination and a detailed history allow diagnosis. X-rays help to evaluate the relative lengths of the metatarsals and rule out arthritis. Blood tests may be required if an inflammatory arthritis is suspected. Sometimes diagnostic injections of local anaesthetic are used to numb the joints and help determine the location of the symptoms.

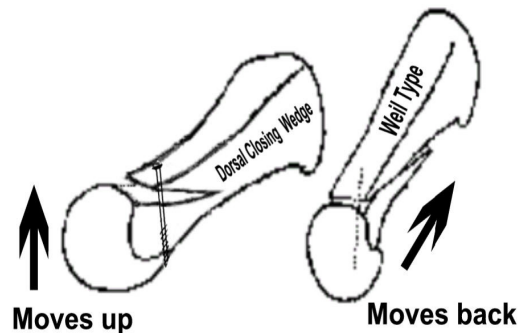
What are the treatment options?

Non-surgical treatment

There are several treatments that may reduce or relieve your symptoms:

- 1) The right footwear for the right occasion in the correct length with a fastening and stiff sole or toe spring.
- 2) Ice
- 3) Podiatry treatment to reduce hard skin and the application of deflective padding
- 4) Taping to correct toe alignment.
- 5) Insoles or orthotics.
- 6) Cortisone injections in conjunction with the above treatments/immobilisation

Surgical treatment



If non-surgical treatment fails to relieve your symptoms, an operation can be performed to correct the problem. This involves shortening and/or lifting up the abnormally aligned metatarsal. This procedure can be carried out in the Day Surgery Unit under local anaesthetic and may be performed in conjunction with toe surgery.

An incision is made on the top of the foot. The metatarsal is cut, re-aligned and secured in a corrected position with a screw. An absorbable suture is used to close the skin. The operation takes between 30-45 minutes.

How long would this restrict my activities?

Two weeks after surgery, the suture tags are cut and you can then bathe and swim. You will need to return to thick-soled lace up shoe or trainers at this stage to help reduce swelling and protect the bone while it heals. You can drive when you feel confident enough to perform an emergency stop. Participation in impact sports is fine

if everything is all right at your three-month review appointment. It is normal for people to have four to six weeks off work for this type of operation.

NB If you have had toe surgery at the same time and have a wire protruding from your toe, you will have to be relatively careful and stay in your post-operative shoe until the wire is removed six weeks later.

Are there any complications associated with the operation?

Specific complications of metatarsal surgery include:

- Transfer pain or skin lesion
- Floating toe.
- Joint stiffness
- Scar contracture
- Fracture
- Non-union of bone

General Complications of foot surgery include:

- Prolonged swelling
- Continued pain
- Infection
- Blood clot
- Delayed healing
- Thickened scar
- Screw or pin movement
- A chronic pain syndrome
- Further surgery may be required

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