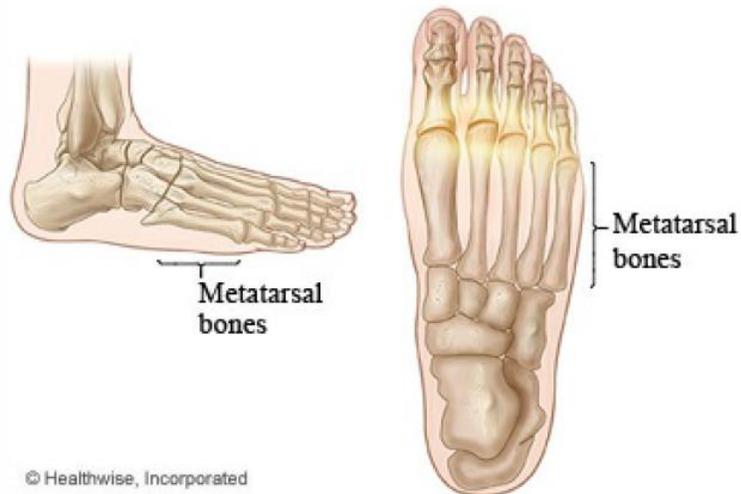


## Metatarsalgia: Care Instructions



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### Your Care Instructions

Metatarsalgia (say "met-uh-tar-SAL-jee-uh") is pain in the ball of the foot. It sometimes spreads to the toes. The ball of the foot is the bottom of the foot, where the toes join the foot.

While walking might be very painful, the pain is usually not a sign of a serious or permanent problem. But any pain can affect your life, so it is important that you treat it.

Pain in this area can be caused by many things. For example, you may have this pain if you stand or walk a lot or wear tight shoes or high heels.

Your pain might be caused by inflammation of a joint (capsulitis). It is most common in the joint at the base of the second toe, near the ball of the foot. Capsulitis happens when ligaments that go around the joint become inflamed. The joint may be swollen. It may feel like there is a small rock under it.

You may have had an X-ray to make sure a more serious problem is not causing your pain.

Treatment may consist of home care, such as rest, wearing different shoes, and taking over-the-counter pain medicines. It can take months for the pain to go away.

If the ligaments around a joint are torn, or if a toe has started to slant toward the toe next to it, you may need surgery.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments and call us 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?

- Rest your foot. If an activity is causing the pain, find another one to do that does not put so much pressure on your foot
- Put ice or a cold pack on your foot when it hurts or after you've done something that usually causes pain. Do this for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin
- 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
- Do not take two or more pain medicines at the same time unless we tell you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful
- Wear roomy, comfortable shoes
- If recommended, use special pads to relieve the pressure on your foot. The pads may fit into your shoes, or they may stick to the soles of your feet
- Ask us about using orthotic shoe devices. These are molded pieces of rubber, leather, metal, plastic, or other synthetic material that are inserted into a shoe
- Wear shoes with good arch support
- Try not to wear high heels or narrow shoes
- Follow our directions for exercise, or consult with your physical therapist

## When should you call for help?

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

- You have new or worse symptoms
- You do not get better as expected

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