

NEUROMA

"DOCTOR, I FEEL LIKE I AM WALKING ON A BALL AND I HAVE NUMBNESS, BURNING AND CRAMPING IN MY TOES AND THE BALL OF MY FOOT."

When a nerve leading to the toes is "pinched" or compressed by the metatarsal bones, discomfort and even severe pain can result.

This condition, sometimes called "Morton's Toe", is more common in women particularly those who frequently wear narrow-toed, stylish shoes.

When compression of a toe nerve persists, a tumor-like thickening of the nerve usually develops. This tumor-like thickening is called a neuroma or neurofibroma. As the compression continues the neuroma gets larger and as it gets larger there is more compression- becoming a vicious cycle.

The symptoms of a neuroma are usually most severe while wearing shoes, especially those styles that compress the forefoot. When the neuroma gets larger, pain can even occur while resting. Sensations vary from numbness or pins and needles in the early stages to a sharp, burning, cramping pain in the ball of the foot radiating into the toes. Sometimes the pain is so severe that one must stop walking, remove the shoe, and massage the area to relieve the pain. Patients frequently incorrectly blame calluses for their pain.

A neuroma can only be removed surgically by a relatively simple out patient procedure completely relieving the pain. Temporary relief can usually be achieved by the injection of medication around the nerve and on rare occasions this relief may be long lasting or permanent. Even in those cases the neuroma is still present.