

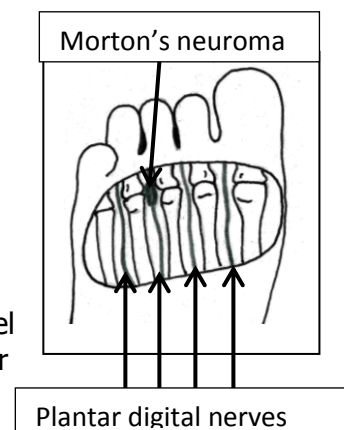
## Morton's Neuroma Advice sheet

### **What is Morton's neuroma?**

Morton's neuroma is a condition that affects one of the nerves that run between the metatarsal bones in the foot. The exact cause is not certain. About a quarter of people only require simple treatments including modification of their footwear. Sometimes surgery is needed for persistent symptoms.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Morton's neuroma can cause a very painful burning or sharp pain in your foot that feels worse when you walk. It may feel like a small lump inside the ball of your foot. Some people describe the pain that they feel as being like walking on a stone or a marble. Some describe it as similar to an electric shock. You may also experience some numbness in the area. The pain is often relieved by taking your shoe off, resting your foot and massaging the area. The symptoms usually occur in the area of the third and fourth toes, but they can also involve other toes.



### **How can it be treated?**

You may be able to treat this problem at home:

- Avoid wearing tight, pointed, or high-heeled shoes. Choose well-fitted shoes with plenty of room for your toes.
- Put ice or a cold pack on the area for 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Always put a cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Take anti-inflammatory medicines to reduce pain and swelling. e.g ibuprofen.
- Rest your feet when you can. Reduce activities that put pressure on the toes.
- Try massaging your foot to relax the muscles around the nerve.
- Steroid or local anaesthetic injections (or a combination of both) into the affected area of the foot may be needed if the simple footwear changes do not fully relieve symptoms. However, the footwear modification measures should still be continued.
- Orthotic devices may sometimes be useful in certain circumstances.
- If these non-surgical measures do not work, surgery is sometimes needed.

### **What is the outlook (prognosis) for Morton's neuroma?**

Footwear modification results in improvement of symptoms in about a third of people. Of those who choose to have surgery, about three-quarters have good results with relief of their symptoms.

### **Can Morton's neuroma be prevented?**

Ensuring that shoes are well fitted, low-heeled and with a wide toe area may help to prevent Morton's neuroma.

Personal Information

#### **Useful Information for patients**

[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)  
[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)  
[www.paintoolkit.org](http://www.paintoolkit.org)  
 nhs24 MSK Help App