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# Morton's Neuroma (DRAFT)

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## Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide you with some general advice and information about how to manage your foot pain. You may be sent this leaflet while waiting for your physiotherapy appointment.



## What is Morton's Neuroma?

A Morton's neuroma is swelling and inflammation of a nerve that lies between two metatarsal bones (toes) of your foot. It causes pain in the ball of your foot and possibly your toes. This swelling causes thickening of the nerve tissue that surrounds the digital nerve that leads to the toes. It is usually found at the base of the third and fourth toes.

This condition can be exacerbated when wearing tight or high heeled shoes which can play a role in symptom cause and certainly make the symptoms worse. The lump (neuroma) is not dangerous, and will not cause problems other than in the foot. Occasionally people have Morton's neuromas in both feet.

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## What causes it?

- The nerves become trapped between the metatarsal bones causing pain. This is often due to ill-fitting footwear and the regular wearing high heeled shoes.
- Doing a lot of running, or other sports or activities that place pressure on the feet
- Having other foot problems- such as **flat feet** (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flat-feet/>) High arches, **bunions** (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bunions/>) or **hammer toes** (<https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/hammer-toes.aspx>)

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## What kind of Symptoms do you feel?

The main symptoms of Morton's neuroma include:

- A shooting, stabbing or burning pain.
- A feeling like a small stone is stuck under your foot.
- Some people may have tingling or numbness in their foot.

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## General Advice

Many of the problems above can be helped by addressing the factors below:

- It can sometimes be treated with simple measures such as comfortable shoes with a soft insole.

- Possible weight loss where appropriate as being overweight or obese increases stress on your foot and toe joints.
- Wear soft insoles and take simple pain tablets as guided by your GP or Chemist. Your chemist will be able to guide you regarding soft pads for your shoes (ask for metatarsal pads).
- Conservative treatment brings people with Morton' neuroma relief 80% of the time. Research has been shown that 41 percent of people who changed their footwear required no further treatment.
- Recovery time can be variable depending on the severity of your Morton's neuroma and the type of treatment you receive. For some people a change to wider shoes can give quick relief. Others may require injections and pain killers to get relief over time.
- Surgery recovery times vary depending on the type of surgery required.

**Find a Pharmacy** For advice on pain relief see (<https://beta.nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy/>)

### **Don't**

- Do not wear tight pointy shoes and/or high heeled or raised heel shoes.

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### **Further ongoing treatment**

- If the above measures do not work, an ultrasound scan may be requested and an injection of local anaesthetic and cortico-steroid will be tried. Sometimes, if the response is not complete, you may require more than one injection.
- If this is not sufficient to control your symptoms, the trapped nerve can be surgically removed.

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### **Going forward**

- If, having followed the advice given for 3-4 weeks, your symptoms fail to improve or if your symptoms deteriorate contact us to book an appointment.

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### **For further information**

Please email [ghnt.newcastlegatesheadtims@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.newcastlegatesheadtims@nhs.net), ring our Booking Office on **0191 4452643** or visit our website at: [www.tims.nhs.uk](http://www.tims.nhs.uk) which provides online guidance and support on managing your musculoskeletal (MSK) condition effectively.

The NHS website also provides trusted online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare to help you manage your condition and/or inform your choices about your health: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

### **Useful links**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer on-the-spot advice and information about the NHS. You can contact them on freephone **0800 032 02 02** or e-mail [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk).

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**Tyneside  
Integrated  
Musculoskeletal  
Service**

TIMS is a partnership between Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust

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