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Forefoot Pain

Sesamoiditis

Helping people to be
the best they can be

Sesamoiditis

What is a Sesamoid?

A sesamoid is a bone embedded in a tendon. Sesamoids are found in several joints in the body. In the normal foot, the sesamoids are two pea-shaped bones located in the ball of the foot, beneath the big toe joint. Acting as a pulley for tendons, the sesamoids help the big toe move normally and provide leverage when the big toe pushes off during walking and running. The sesamoids also serve as a weightbearing surface for the first metatarsal bone (the long bone connected to the big toe), absorbing the weight placed on the ball of the foot when walking, running and jumping.

What causes sesamoid injuries?

Sesamoid injuries are often associated with activities requiring increased pressure on the ball of the foot, such as running, basketball, football, golf, tennis and ballet. In addition people with high arches are at risk for developing sesamoid problems. Frequent wearing of high-heels shoes can also be a contributing factor.

What are the symptoms and causes of sesamoid injuries?

Sesamoiditis is associated with a dull, longstanding pain beneath the big toe joint. The pain comes and goes, usually occurring with certain shoes or certain activities. It is an overuse injury involving chronic inflammation of the sesamoid bones and the tendons involved with those bones. It is caused by increased pressure on the sesamoids.

What are the treatment options for sesamoid injuries?

Treatment for sesamoid injuries may include one or more of the following:

- **Padding, strapping or taping** – a pad may be placed in the shoe to cushion/offload the inflamed sesamoid area, or the toe may be taped or strapped to relieve that area of tension
- **Oral medications** – Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, are often helpful in reducing the pain and inflammation
- **Orthotic devices** – insoles that fit into the shoe may be prescribed for long-term treatment of sesamoiditis to redistribute the pressure placed on the ball of the foot

If all the above treatment options fail, surgery may be

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Open Monday – Friday

09.00 – 12.30 and 13.30 –

16.00