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The information in the leaflet was valid at the date of production **December 2019** and is due for review on **December 2021**
Leaflet code: **F-FPC-19-820**



Forefoot Pain

Capsulitis

Helping people to be
the best they can be

Capsulitis

What is capsulitis and where does it occur?

Capsulitis is most commonly found in the second metatarsophalangeal joint (2nd toe joint), but can occur in any of the toe joints. The ligaments surrounding the joint form a capsule, helping the joint to function properly. Capsulitis is where these ligaments become inflamed causing discomfort. If left untreated, capsulitis can eventually lead to a weakening of surrounding ligaments that cause dislocation of the toe. Capsulitis – also known as predislocation syndrome – is a common condition that can occur at any age.

What are the causes of capsulitis?

Generally, it is believed that capsulitis is caused by poor foot mechanics, where the ball of the foot beneath the joint takes an excessive amount of weight-bearing force. Certain conditions or characteristics can make a person prone to experiencing excessive pressure on the ball of the foot. These most commonly include a severe bunion deformity, a second toe longer than the big toe, an arch that is structurally unstable and a tight calf muscle.

What are the symptoms of capsulitis?

Due to capsulitis being a progressive disorder meaning symptoms usually worsen if left untreated – early recognition and

What are the treatments for capsulitis?

The best time to treat capsulitis is during the early stages, before the toe starts to drift. At that time, nonsurgical approaches can be used to stabilize the joint, reduce the symptoms and address the underlying cause of the condition.

Here are some of the early treatment options for capsulitis:

- **Rest and ice** – Staying off the foot and applying ice packs help reduce the swelling and pain. Apply an ice pack, placing a thin towel between the ice and the skin. Use ice for 20 minutes and then wait at least 40 minutes before icing again.
- **Oral medications** – Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may help relieve the pain and inflammation.
- **Taping/splinting** – it may be necessary to tape the toe so that it will stay in the correct position. This helps relieve pain and prevent further drifting of the toe.
- **Stretching** – stretching exercises may be prescribed for patients who have tight calf muscles.
- **Shoe modifications** – Supportive shoes with stiff soles are recommended because they control the motion and lessen the amount of pressure on the ball of the foot.

Contact details:

Podiatry Office –

01244 385000

Open Monday – Friday

09.00 – 12.30 and 13.30 –

16.00