

Metatarsalgia

INFORMATION

The term refers to pain under the metatarsal heads.

FEATURES

- Pain on walking or prolonged standing.
- Evidence of callosity formation under the metatarsal heads.
- Usually accompanied by lesser toe deformities such as hammer toes, mallet toes and tight Tendo Achilles.
- Also may be present in association with pes cavus, hallux valgus and inflammatory arthritis, i.e.: RA
- **MUST BE** distinguished from pain between the metatarsal heads, shooting into the web spaces due to a Morton's Neuroma.

EVIDENCE

- Metatarsalgia due to pes cavus or idiopathic causes responds in some cases to weight relieving inserts or physiotherapy.
- Metatarsalgia secondary to other causes such as Hallux Valgus responds to correction of the underlying cause.
- Metatarsalgia secondary to inflammatory responds to orthotics in the early stages but fixed deformities require surgery.

INITIAL TREATMENT

- Once diagnosis has been made, referral to orthotics for weight relieving inserts.
- Referral to physiotherapy for stretching exercises for the Tendo Achilles.
- In the presence of Hallux Valgus, inflammatory arthritis, refer to secondary care.

FURTHER MANAGEMENT

If no response or inadequate response within three months of orthotics, discuss the option of referral to secondary care with patient

Referral should only be made IF

- **Patient understands that referral is likely to be for surgery**
- **Patient is fit to undergo surgery**
- **Patient understands that their operation will be carried out within 18 weeks and is able to commit to that timescale**