

Our highly skilled podiatrists

are registered with the Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC) and members of the College of Podiatrists. The practice is accredited by the College of Podiatrists (CoP).

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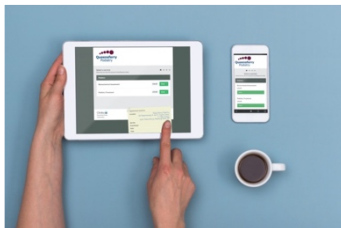
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Professional and caring podiatrists

Stress Fracture



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A Guide for patients



What is a Stress Fracture?

A stress fracture is a fatigue-induced fracture of the bone caused by repeated stress over time. Stress fractures can also develop from normal use of a bone that's weakened by a condition such as osteoporosis.

Stress fractures are most common in the weight-bearing bones of the lower leg and foot. Track and field athletes and military recruits who carry heavy packs over long distances are at highest risk, but anyone can sustain a stress fracture. If you start a new exercise program, for example, you might develop stress fractures if you do too much too soon.

X-rays usually do not show evidence of new stress fractures but can be used approximately three weeks after onset of pain when the bone begins to remodel. Complete rest and a walking boot are usually used for a period of four to eight weeks. although periods of rest of twelve weeks or more are not uncommon for more severe stress fractures.

Prevention?

Some stress fractures don't heal properly, which can cause chronic problems. If underlying causes are not taken care of, you might be at a higher risk of additional stress fractures. Simple steps can help you prevent stress fractures.

Make changes slowly, start any new exercise program slowly and progress gradually. Add low-impact activities to your exercise regimen to avoid repetitively stressing a particular part of your body.

Make sure your shoes fit well and are appropriate for your activity. Your podiatrist can assess and advise you if orthotics (shoe inserts) could help redistribute pressure. Get proper nutrition. To keep your bones strong, make sure your diet includes enough calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients.

Risk Factors?

Factors that can increase your risk of stress fractures include:

- High-impact sports, such as running, basketball, tennis, dance or gymnastics.
- Increased activity - can occur in people who suddenly shift from a sedentary lifestyle to an active training regimen or who rapidly increase the intensity, duration or frequency of training sessions.
- Sex - women, especially those who have abnormal or absent menstrual periods, are at higher risk of developing stress fractures.
- Foot problems - people who have flat feet or high, rigid arches are more likely to develop stress fractures. Worn footwear contributes to the problem.
- Weakened bones – conditions such as osteoporosis can weaken your bones and make it easier for stress fractures to occur.
- Previous stress fractures - having had one or more stress fractures puts you at higher risk of having more.
- Lack of nutrients - eating disorders and lack of vitamin D and calcium can make bones more likely to develop stress fractures.

Symptoms?

At first, you might barely notice the pain associated with a stress fracture, but it tends to worsen with time. The tenderness usually starts at a specific spot and decreases during rest. You might have swelling around the painful area.

