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Established in 1999, we have dedicated over 25 years to providing a professional and welcoming podiatry service. Our expertise includes:

- Routine issues, such as nail problems, hard skin and corns.
- Diabetic foot care and check-ups.
- Musculoskeletal problems.
- Orthotic fitting.
- Nail surgery.

- ✓ Our podiatrists are degree trained.
- ✓ Registered with the Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC).
- ✓ Members of the Royal College of Podiatrists.

Individual Advice:



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Plantar Plate Tear



Guidance for Patients

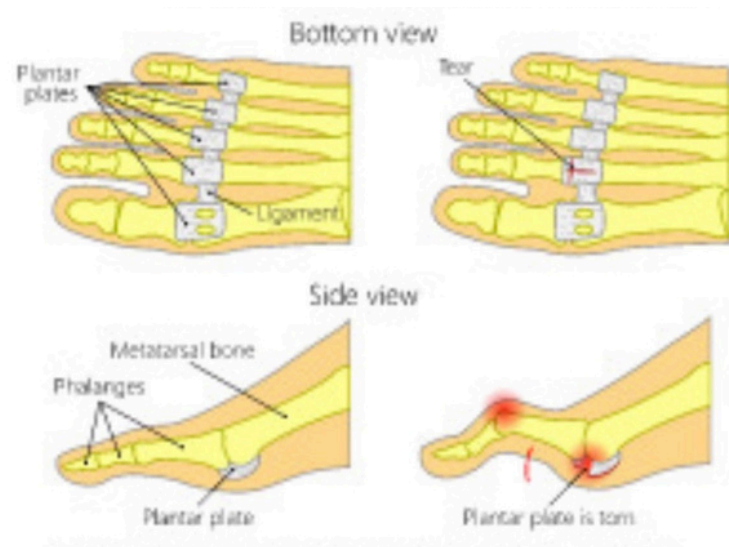


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What is Plantar Plate Tear?

The plantar plate is a thick ligament type structure which lies beneath the metatarsophalangeal joints of the lesser toes. This structure helps prevent toes from drifting, splaying, or bending too far up during normal walking and pushing off.

Tears most often develop at the second toe because the second metatarsal is often the longest. Injuries of the plantar plate include partial tears through to complete rupture.



What causes it?

Altered Foot Function:

- The presence of existing foot deformities such as a bunion, a long second toe, flat feet or joint laxity within the joints of the foot can all lead to overloading within these joints.

Footwear Factors:

- Minimal cushion, high heels, or flexible soles without forefoot support increase strain.

Activity Related Factors:

- *Repetitive stress:* Activities such as running, dancing, or jumping sports.
- 1. • *Sudden trauma:* Hyperextension injury of the toe, such as stubbing it or catching it on carpet.
- 2. • *Occupation:* Certain occupations may lead to greater strain on these joints.

Age and Gender:

- *Age:* These injuries are most common in the over 50s.
- 1. • *Gender:* It is more common in females.

Medical Factors

- *Inflammatory arthritis*, e.g. rheumatoid or psoriatic arthritis: Affects the small joints in the foot, making them more vulnerable to this condition.
- *Obesity:* If you have a higher than average BMI you are more at risk.
- *Diabetes:* May alter foot mechanics and delay healing.

Symptoms

Persistent pain and swelling under the ball of the foot, extending toward the toes, is often an early indicator of a plantar plate tear. This pain can typically be triggered by bending the toe upward. Swelling may also appear on the top of the foot, sometimes accompanied by redness.

Many individuals describe a sensation of “walking on the bones of the foot,” and a noticeable “V” sign may be present, where two toes separate more than usual due to the tear.

Chronic Plantar Plate Injury

If the plantar plate tear is not treated properly, the condition becomes chronic and the deformity can be greater. As the deformity progresses, the cartilage in the joint capsule can become eroded, leading to arthritis and increased pain.

Treatment

Initially, treating the plantar plate tear will focus on relieving the painful symptoms. This may involve the use of:

Strapping can be very helpful in reducing pain. Use zinc oxide tape to pull the toe in a downward position to help offload the area.

Padding to offload the damaged area.

Avoiding the activities that aggravate the pain.

Anti-inflammatory medications.

A corticosteroid injection may be considered if conservative treatments have failed to improve the symptoms.

Very occasionally, surgery is recommended if conservative treatment fails (typically over 3–6 months) or full thickness tears with significant instability or deformity.

Restoring the plantar plate can take time, with the majority of patients pain-free within 3-4 months. The initial symptoms do improve faster, allowing most people to return to regular activity within one month.