

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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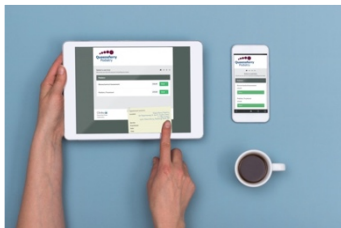
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Professional and caring podiatrists

Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome



A Guide for patients

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What is Tarsal Tunnel syndrome?

Tarsal tunnel syndrome is a compression, or squeezing, on the posterior tibial nerve that produces symptoms anywhere along the path of the nerve running from the inside of the ankle into the foot.

Tarsal tunnel syndrome is similar to carpal tunnel syndrome, which occurs in the wrist. Both disorders arise from the compression of a nerve in a confined space.

What causes it?

Tarsal Tunnel syndrome is caused by anything that produces compression on the posterior tibial nerve, such as:

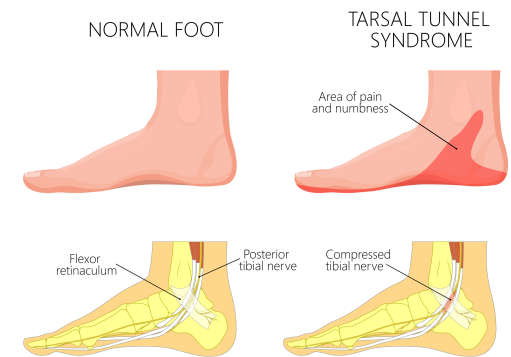
- Osteoarthritis or post-traumatic ankle deformities (scar tissue may also restrict movement in the tarsal tunnel and cause nerve entrapment) or tenosynovitis. It may also be associated with rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes.
- A cyst, lipoma, ganglion, exostosis or neoplasms within the tarsal tunnel.
- Having flat feet increases the risk of developing tarsal tunnel syndrome.
- Trauma to the ankle.

If left untreated the condition can progress and, in some cases, it may result in permanent nerve damage.

Symptoms?

- Ankle pain and a burning sensation.
- Numbness and tingling of the sole of the foot and may radiate along the side of the foot, sometimes up the calf.
- Symptoms worse at night.

The **tarsal tunnel** is the narrow space that lies on the inside of the ankle next to the ankle bones. The tunnel is covered with a thick ligament that protects and maintains the structure contained within the tunnel, including the posterior tibial nerve, which is the focus of tarsal tunnel syndrome.



It is important to seek early treatment, if any of the symptoms occur. If left untreated, the condition progresses and may result in permanent nerve damage.

Treatment?

There are a variety of treatment options which can help to treat Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome:

- Rest and applying an ice pack wrapped in a towel to the affected area can help to ease the pain.
- Oral medications - nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as Ibuprofen, help reduce the pain and inflammation.
- Orthotics (custom shoe inserts) may be prescribed, by a podiatrist, to help maintain the arch and limit excessive motion that can cause compression of the nerve.
- Physiotherapy - ultrasound therapy, exercises and other may be prescribed to reduce symptoms.
- Strengthening and stretching exercises once the pain has subsided.
- A corticosteroid injection may be considered if conservative treatments have failed to improve the symptoms.
- Surgery may be considered as a final resort.