

Hallux Rigidus

Does your big toe joint ache and feel stiff with every step? Do you have difficulty bending your big toe when you walk? Do you have pain every time you try to wear heels? If so, you may have Hallux Rigidus. Hallux Rigidus is an arthritic condition affecting the big toe joint that generally first presents with mild aching pain with movement of the joint. Normally, the joint has a smooth pain free gliding motion in an up and down direction, but when it becomes arthritic the joint loses this flexibility and smooth motion. Often, patients will relate a bump on the top of the joint or a swollen enlarged joint. Patients will often report pain with walking and exercise activities. Sometimes patients will relate a grinding or grating sensation within the joint due to loss of cartilage and a resultant bone on bone joint. Over time, every step that is taken begins to cause the big toe joint to jam the two bones together and create pain as more and more cartilage is lost. This arthritic condition tends to progress with time.

Treatment is generally aimed at both non-surgical care and surgical care. Non-surgical care includes: change in shoes, custom orthotics or arch supports, icing, steroid injections, oral and/or topical anti-inflammatories, and modification of activity. When non-surgical care does not resolve symptoms to the patient's satisfaction, surgical correction is the next step. Surgical options consist of remodeling and reshaping the joint, a joint implant, or fusion of the joint to prevent all motion.

Although arthritis of the big toe joint can be very painful and prevent you from participating in the activities you enjoy, there are many treatment options available to aid in reducing and resolving pain. Your podiatrist will be able to discuss all the treatment options available to help you return to the daily activities that you would like to continue to enjoy.