

Tendonitis (of the foot)

What's the problem?

Tendonitis is inflammation of a tendon anywhere in the body. **Inflammation** is a condition where a body part becomes swollen, turns red, and feels hot or painful.

A **tendon** is body tissue that connects muscles to bone. When a tendon is injured or overused, the tendon gets inflamed and painful which leads to tendonitis.

How does it feel?

Most patients feel an aching pain in the area of the inflamed tendon. There may also be swelling and/or weakness of the tendon. The pain usually increases with activity.

How did this happen?

Foot tendonitis can develop in several ways.

A common cause of tendonitis is overuse. Overuse happens when you increase your activity level too quickly, or if you don't stretch properly or enough before and after activity.

Trauma to the foot, such as an ankle sprain or medical problems like arthritis, may also cause tendonitis.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will look at your foot and have you move your foot to see where the pain is. Your doctor will look for swelling and feel your tendon to check for

tears or gaps in the tendon. Your doctor may also watch you walk or stand to check the structure of your foot and tendon.

Your doctor might also want to get pictures of your tendon to check for tendonitis, and so they may order an x-ray, MRI, or ultrasound of your foot.

How can I care for myself?

Tendonitis typically gets better without surgery. You will have to care for the area every day until your pain is gone.

- Your doctor may recommend putting ice on the area, elevating the foot (resting the foot in a raised position), and taking pain medication to help with the pain and swelling.
- You will need to rest or lower your activity level until the pain is better.
- Wearing a compression wrap on the foot, like an elastic bandage or ACE™ bandage, can also help with the inflammation and pain. You can buy these bandages at any pharmacy.
- Do the stretches your doctor shows you for your specific area of tendonitis.
- Your doctor may also recommend that you go to physical therapy.
- Once your pain gets better, you can slowly increase your activity time and intensity. It's important to do this slowly, since going back to activity too soon can cause the tendonitis to come back.

How will my doctor care for me?

If the pain continues, your doctor may send you to physical therapy. In physical therapy, you may have different treatments such as stretches, strengthening exercises, massage, and/or electrical stimulation.

Your doctor may ask you to start wearing a custom-made foot device called an **orthotic**. This might be a special walking boot or an ankle brace that fits in your

shoe. Your doctor may also want you to wear supportive shoes (athletic or tennis shoes) whenever you're walking or active to prevent tendonitis in future.

In more severe cases, your doctor may recommend surgery to repair your tendon.

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