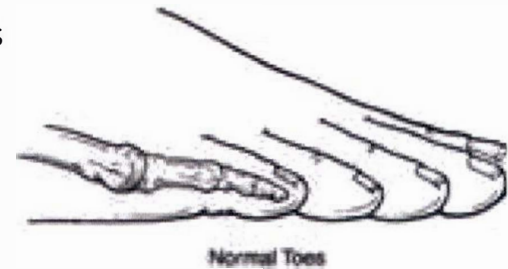


Basso Foot & Ankle Clinics

Hammertoes

What Is Hammertoe?

- Hammertoe is a contracture (bending) deformity of one or both joints of the second, third, fourth, or fifth toes. This abnormal bending can put pressure on the toe when wearing shoes.
- Hammertoes usually start out as mild deformities and can get progressively worse over time.
- In the earlier stages, hammertoes are flexible and the symptoms can often be managed with noninvasive measures. But if left untreated, hammertoes can become more rigid and arthritic and will not respond to nonsurgical treatment.

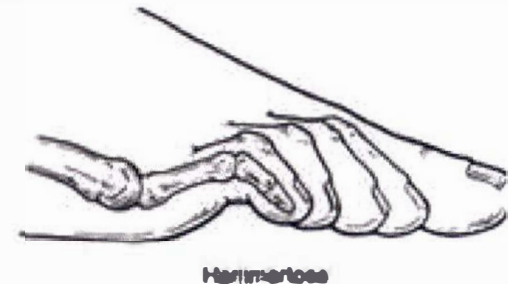


Causes

- The most common cause of hammertoe is a muscle/tendon imbalance, a trauma, or genetics.

Symptoms

- Pain or irritation of the affected toe when wearing shoes.
- Calluses (a buildup of skin) on the toe, between two toes or on the ball of the foot. Sometimes this callus can lead to open sores



Nonsurgical Treatment

- Padding corns and calluses. Medicated pads are generally not recommended because they may contain a small amount of acid that can be harmful.
- Changes in shoe wear. Wear shoes with a deep, roomy toebox (wide enough and tall enough for the toes) and try to avoid heels
- Orthotic devices. A custom orthotic device placed in your shoe may help control the muscle/tendon imbalance.
- Injection. Steroid injections are sometimes used to ease pain and inflammation
- Medications. Oral nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may be recommended to reduce pain and inflammation.
- Splinting/strapping. Splints or small straps may be applied by the surgeon to realign the bent toe and keep pressure off areas

When Is Surgery Needed?

- In some cases, usually when the hammertoe has become more rigid and painful, or when an open sore has developed, surgery is needed.
- Often, patients with hammertoe have bunions or other foot deformities corrected at the same time.
- As always the length of the recovery period will vary, depending on the procedure or procedures performed.