



GARNET ORTHOPEDIC
SOLUTIONS



PATIENT EDUCATION GUIDE

Understanding Morton's Neuroma and Finding Relief for Your Toes

A practical guide to why the ball of your foot burns, tingles, or goes numb, what puts you at risk, and how a personalized plan can get you back to comfortable, pain-free steps.

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Contents

01 What Is Morton's Neuroma?

02 Recognizing the Symptoms

03 Risk Factors Worth Knowing

04 What You Can Do Today

05 Staying Active With Pain

06 Your Treatment Options

07 Footwear Recommendations

08 Custom Orthotics vs. Off-the-Shelf

09 What to Expect at Garnet

10 Prevention and Long-Term Comfort

11 About Garnet Orthopedic Solutions

SECTION 01

What Is Morton's Neuroma?

Morton's neuroma is the irritation and compression of a common plantar digital nerve in the foot, often causing numbness and tingling in the toes. With a true neuroma, this compression results from a thickening of the tissue surrounding the nerve itself. Named for the doctor who first described it, Morton's neuroma most commonly affects the nerve running between the third and fourth metatarsal bones, which is why pain typically shows up in the third and fourth toes.

SECTION 02

Recognizing the Symptoms

Symptoms can include:

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Shooting pain
- Burning pain
- Radiating pain to adjacent toes
- A feeling as though your sock is bunched up or wrinkled beneath your toes
- Increased pain with activity
- Relief upon removing your footwear

SECTION 03

Risk Factors Worth Knowing

Risk factors for discomfort include:

- High heels
- Tight or ill-fitting footwear
- High-impact activity
- Other foot complications, such as bunions or hammertoes

The exact cause of Morton's neuroma isn't fully understood, but possible contributors include irritation, pressure, or injury to the common digital nerve. Proper footwear is a crucial factor in preventing that pain from building.

If tight or ill-fitting footwear might be part of what's driving your symptoms, an assessment can confirm it and point to the right fix.

[Book an Assessment](#)

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SECTION 04

What You Can Do Today

- Make sure your footwear has adequate width and extra depth in the toe box. This gives your foot room to splay and helps minimize mechanical compression of the nerve from the shoe itself
- Try a metatarsal pad. These work by offloading the neuroma, supporting your distal transverse arch, and can be added to a shoe on their own or built into a custom orthotic
- Decrease high-impact activities. High impact raises pressure on the feet and can worsen symptoms; reducing it, alongside proper footwear, helps prevent flare-ups
- Maintain a healthy weight, which reduces physical stress and pressure on the foot; your family physician or a dietician can offer more guidance here

SECTION 05

Staying Active With Pain

Staying active with Morton's neuroma is entirely possible. Choosing the right type and fit of footwear for your activity is crucial, with adequate width and depth to reduce mechanical pressure on the foot. High-impact activity increases stress on the foot and can worsen symptoms, so favoring lower-impact activities is generally the more comfortable path while you manage things.

SECTION 06

Your Treatment Options

Treatment for Morton's neuroma typically follows a stepped approach, moving from least invasive to most invasive. Less invasive options include metatarsal pads, footwear modifications, and both off-the-shelf and custom foot orthoses, all of which can be discussed with your podiatrist and other healthcare professionals as conservative first steps.

More invasive options, such as medication, corticosteroid or sclerosing alcohol injections, and surgery, are typically discussed with your family physician to determine the right plan for your situation.

SECTION 07

Footwear Recommendations

Choosing appropriate footwear plays an important role in managing Morton's neuroma. Look for adequate width and extra depth in the toe box to avoid excessive pressure on the foot and further compression of the affected nerve.



Roomy, well-fitted footwear takes pressure off the forefoot and the nerve beneath it.

SECTION 08

Custom Orthotics vs. Off-the-Shelf

Custom foot orthoses can be genuinely useful in reducing Morton's neuroma symptoms. Metatarsal pads can be built directly into the device to support the distal transverse arch, reducing mechanical compression on the affected nerve. Because custom devices can be modified, and individual tolerance to metatarsal pad placement varies widely, that adjustability becomes a real advantage, since very small differences in the device can produce large differences in relief.

Off-the-shelf orthoses are prefabricated and can be fit to your shoes right from the shelf; they're matched as a best fit to your foot and are often somewhat customizable. The key factor to look for with Morton's neuroma is a metatarsal pad component that supports the distal transverse arch and helps offload the nerve.

OFF-THE-SHELF ORTHOTICS		CUSTOM ORTHOTICS
Cost	Cheaper upfront	Often partly covered by extended health benefits
Availability	Instant, off a shelf	Made for you, ready in a matter of days
Fit	Best-fit match to your foot	Molded from a 3D model of your exact foot
Metatarsal pad	Fixed placement, if included at all	Precisely placed and easily adjusted
Lifespan	Wears out, replace often	Built to last, and modifiable as your needs change

An OTS device with a metatarsal pad may be enough to relieve your symptoms. If it isn't, custom is built to get you the rest of the way.

Curious whether custom orthotics with metatarsal support could help?

See Custom Orthotics

SECTION 09

What to Expect at Garnet

Your Garnet pedorthist creates an individualized treatment plan suited to your specific needs, goals, and symptoms, addressing both your current concerns and future prevention. At your initial appointment, we complete a thorough foot examination, and a follow-up exam ensures your plan is meeting your goals so it can be reassessed as needed. During these appointments, we typically:

- Assess joint and muscle function, including range of motion and gait
- Assess your footwear for both fit and function
- Identify modifiable risk factors and recommend changes
- Identify areas of risk using specialized tools such as pressure mapping
- Discuss a treatment plan, which may include a footwear change, activity modification, custom foot orthoses, or a referral for complementary treatment

Want to understand what a gait analysis actually involves before you book?

Learn About Gait Analysis

Book Now

Prevention and Long-Term Comfort

Because the exact cause of Morton's neuroma isn't fully understood, prevention centers on the factors we do know contribute to it:

- Choose footwear with adequate width and depth through the toe box
- Avoid high heels and tight, narrow shoes where possible
- Moderate high-impact activity, especially during flare-ups
- Maintain a healthy body weight to reduce pressure on the forefoot
- Use a metatarsal pad or custom orthotic where your assessment shows it would help

Do you suffer with the numb and tingly toes of a Morton's neuroma? Relief starts with the right support.

Ready to talk to a pedorthist?

Book a consultation and get a treatment plan built around your specific mechanics, gait, and goals.

[Book an Appointment](#)

Garnet Orthopedic Solutions provides pedorthic assessment, custom orthotics, and footwear guidance built around each patient's specific anatomy and goals, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Our clinic combines hands-on biomechanical assessment with practical, evidence-informed treatment, so patients leave with a plan they understand and can actually follow.

Jeff Lewis, C. Ped (C)

Canadian Certified Pedorthist

Jeff leads patient assessment and custom orthotic care at Garnet Orthopedic Solutions, working with patients to identify the root cause of their foot and lower limb pain and to build a treatment plan suited to their specific needs, goals, and symptoms.

Appendix: Image Sources

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#	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPHER	SOURCE
1	Cover — close-up of shoes and bag in a boutique	Alexandra Maria	pexels.com/photo/336372
2	Sec. 7 — brown sandals on feet	Pexels contributor	pexels.com/photo/15669736

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