

Hallux Rigidus & Arthritis of the Big Toe



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Osteoarthritis of the Big Toe

- Hallux rigidus often leads to osteoarthritis of the big toe
 - “Hallux” means big toe
 - “Rigidus” means rigid
- Big toe “jams” when walking
 - This breaks down the joint
 - Causes pain and eventually arthritis



Hallux Rigidus: Can Be Disabling

- We use the big toe when we
 - Walk
 - Stoop
 - Climb
 - Stand
- Not the same as a bunion



Can Be a Slow & Progressive Process

- May first appear as swelling & redness
- May first occur with
 - Certain activities
 - Certain shoes



From Hallux Limitus to Hallux Rigidus

- Hallux limitus
 - Motion is somewhat limited
- Hallux rigidus
 - Range of motion decreases
 - Becomes stiffer & loses motion
 - More pain & destruction, resulting in arthritis



What Causes Hallux Rigidus?

- Structural problems related to the shape of the foot
 - Affects the way the foot functions
- Overuse (stooping, squatting, bending the toe)
- Contributors:
 - Previous injury
 - Certain shoe wear
 - Other disorders



Symptoms: The Early Stages

- Pain & stiffness in the big toe during use
 - Walking, bending, standing, etc.
- Difficulty with certain activities
 - Squatting, running, etc.
- Cold, damp weather can aggravate symptoms
- Swelling & inflammation may occur



Symptoms: The Later Stages

- Range of motion progressively decreases
- Pain even during rest
- Bone spurs & joint enlargement
 - Difficulty with certain shoes & activities



What To Do

- Earlier treatment means better chances of slowing the progression
- See a foot & ankle surgeon when you notice symptoms
- The sooner it is diagnosed, the easier it is to treat



Evaluation & Diagnosis

- Examination of foot & toe
- X-rays to determine arthritis, bone spurs, etc.
- Diagnose & develop treatment plan



Nonsurgical Treatment

- Changes in footwear
- Orthotics
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs)
- Corticosteroid injections
- Physical therapy



Surgical Treatment

- Various types of surgery
- Surgeon will select the best option for you based on:
 - Extent of your condition
 - Your age
 - Your activity level
 - Other factors
- Goal is to reduce pain & improve quality of life



If Your Big Toe Doesn't Feel Right, Get a Full Evaluation & Effective Care

(Place DPM contact info here)



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