



David R. Sullivan, DPM



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Dr. Sullivan Helps Patient Avoid Ankle Surgery and Heal Wound with Flexor Tenotomy

Several years ago, David Ferrin jumped from a ladder. His foot landed in the dirt, and he heard his left ankle pop. At that time, David predicted to his wife that he would eventually have trouble with his ankle. Fast forward to 2021, and David's ankle was swollen, causing pain and affecting his mobility.

David then met with several orthopedists who suggested that ankle fusion surgery was the only treatment available, which fuses the ankle bones. While an ankle fusion does relieve pain, David's ankle would have had a limited range of motion and affected how he walked.

This change to his gait would have caused wear and tear and led to arthritis in other parts of his ankle, foot and knee. Besides wanting to avoid surgery, David didn't feel this was viable. David's wife then began searching for another alternative and found Dr. David Sullivan of Westfield Foot and Ankle.

After performing an examination and taking X-rays of David's foot and ankle, Dr. Sullivan agreed that ankle fusion was one way to address David's problem. However, he also offered David a conservative solution to eliminate his pain and help him avoid surgery – a custom brace. The custom brace David wears daily allows him to walk normally while leaving his ankle's range of motion unaffected. Most importantly, he is pain-free with the brace and doesn't need surgery. "I don't feel any pain, and it's just wonderful," said David.

Recently, David went to see Dr. Sullivan and addressed an excruciating wound on the bottom of his right big toe that was not healing due to bearing weight and a bend in the toe called a hammertoe. For the wound to heal, Dr. Sullivan performed a flexor tenotomy on the big toe and the second, third and fourth toes, which were also bent. This procedure will eliminate the pressure on each of the toes and allow each toe to lay flat so that the wound will heal.



David Ferrin

While surgery is one way to relieve the pain of hammertoes, Dr. Sullivan offers an in-office, and incision-free procedure for painful hammertoes that can be minorly adjusted by hand in our office. With the flexor tenotomy, the patient doesn't receive any stitches. The flexor tenotomy uses local anesthesia and involves piercing the skin on the bottom of the toe, beneath the deformed joint, and releasing the tendon that's keeping the toe contracted. The site of the procedure is dressed in a few band-aids, and the patient can continue with their day and resume normal activities.

After the procedure, the toe will still look bent when at rest. Still, it will flatten when the patient stands, and the pain from a hammertoe will be dramatically less, or there will be no pain. Since the patient doesn't have surgery, they don't have to worry about serious complications, and they can save thousands of dollars.

David thinks Dr. Sullivan is a great human being and doctor and would recommend him because "he talks to you and explains everything." He finds Dr. Sullivan very personable and likes his sense of humor.

"The other doctors that talked to me said we ought to fuse that, but they didn't talk about my ankle not moving at all and didn't talk to me about anything else," said David. "I didn't get anything else out of them except fuse it. Dr. Sullivan took the time to talk with me, exam my foot and ankle, present me with another option and explain all my options to me. I can't say enough about him."

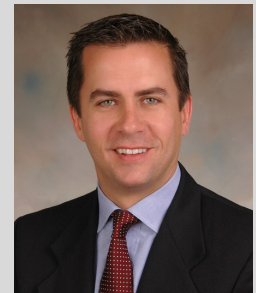
Westfield Foot and Ankle

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Office Hours

Mon: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Tues: 9:00 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Wed: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Thurs: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Fri: 8:30 a.m.- 12 noon
Sat. & Sun. - Closed

Meet Our Doctor



David R. Sullivan,
DPM, FACFAS, FACCWS

www.westfieldfoot.com



Get Your Feet Ready for Sandal Season

Are you feeling self-conscious about wearing sandals or sitting by the pool this summer? Below are some common foot conditions that could be keeping your feet from being sandal-ready this season and information on treatment.

1. Bunion

If you have a bump on the side of your big toe, it could be a bunion. Bunions are often genetic; however, improper shoes, such as high heels or shoes with a tight toe box, can cause bunions to become painful or to progress. Treatment may only require monitoring your feet and making modest modifications to your footwear, or depending on the bunion's severity, surgery may be the best option.

2. Hammertoe

A hammertoe is a bending deformity of one or both joints of your toes. This abnormal bending can put pressure on the toe when wearing shoes. Hammertoes should receive prompt attention because of their progressive nature. They do not improve without some kind of intervention. At our office, we offer the flexor tenotomy – an in-office, incision-free procedure.

3. Melanoma

Melanoma (the deadliest type of skin cancer) is the type of skin cancer most frequently found on the feet. If you notice an abnormal freckle or mole anywhere on your foot, even under your toenail, it is best to have us evaluate it. Early detection is key.

4. Haglund's Deformity

If you notice a painful bony enlargement on the back of your heel, it could be a Haglund's deformity. The soft tissue near the Achilles tendon



becomes irritated when the bony enlargement rubs against shoes. This often leads to painful bursitis, which is an inflammation of the fluid-filled sac between the tendon and the bone—the bursa. We can treat a Haglund's deformity nonsurgically, but when conservative methods fail, surgery may be needed to relieve pain.

5. Tailor's Bunion

While most people have heard of the most common type of bunion, which is near the big toe, another type of bunion is the tailor's bunion or bunionette, which occurs near the little toe. If you notice a painful bump at the base of your little toe, it could be a tailor's bunion. We can provide you with conservative methods of treatment as well as surgical options to help alleviate the pain.

No matter your foot ailments, for best results, schedule an appointment with Dr. David Sullivan. He can provide you with a proper diagnosis and offer treatment options specific to your condition.

Article courtesy of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

Foot Fractures Can Signal Osteoporosis



May is National Osteoporosis Awareness Month

Unexplained foot pain or foot fracture can actually be an early sign of osteoporosis, a bone-thinning disease that weakens bones and can lead to fractures or breaks.

Osteoporosis often progresses without any symptoms or is not diagnosed until a person experiences pain from a bone fracture. Bones with osteoporosis are in a weakened state, and normal weightbearing actions, such as walking, can cause the bones in the foot to break. Many of the patients who come to our office with foot pain find out they actually have a hairline break in the bone (stress fracture), without having experienced an injury.

While osteoporosis is most commonly seen in women over age 50, younger people and men are also affected. Early symptoms can include

increased pain with walking accompanied by redness and swelling on the top of the foot.

If you are living with osteoporosis, it's important to protect your feet from stress fractures. Our office recommends the following to keep your feet safe and comfortable.

1. Wear shoes designed for the exercise or sport. Athletic shoes that support your arch and cushion the heel are the best to wear. Custom orthotics may also help provide extra support and shock absorption.

2. Start new workouts gradually. Be sure to stretch or warm up for your workout and start new exercise routines gradually. Increase your exercise intensity by only 10 percent each week. If your feet get sore, use rest, ice, compression and elevation (RICE).

3. Protect your feet from bacteria. Sweaty shoes and public showers at the gym are breeding grounds for bacteria, including resistant strains like MRSA. Never go barefoot while in public areas, and be sure to cover cuts and cracks in the skin or ingrown toenails to help keep out germs. If you have a cut or scrape that becomes infected and does not heal in a timely manner, call our office to have it examined.

If you are suffering from unexplained foot pain, contact our office to schedule an appointment with Dr. David Sullivan for a proper diagnosis.

Article Courtesy of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

Good to know... Dr. David Sullivan is a board-certified wound specialist and can perform in office procedures such as wound care, biopsies, skin grafts, ingrown toenail removal, etc. Having patients come to our office vs. a hospital setting can help relieve the hospital resources as well as minimizing patient exposure.

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