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Patient Avoids Hammertoe Surgery with Nonsurgical, Painless In-office Procedure

Tana Meko was supposed to have surgery again for her hammertoes. Four of her toes were turning under once more causing blisters and bleeding on the top of her toes from rubbing against her shoes. She was in such excruciating pain that she could only wear sandals and winter was coming.

Initially scheduled for August, her surgery was postponed due to a false positive COVID-19 test followed by Meko reconsidering the surgery. She was worried that her toes would develop the same problem again requiring surgery for a third time. It was during this postponement that Meko read about the flexor tenotomy procedure for hammertoes written by Dr. Sullivan for the Current weekly newspaper.



A hammertoe is a bend in a toe that won't go away. This painful condition develops because of imbalances in the muscles, tendons or ligaments. When working properly, the toes stay straight but when foot structure, shoe choices, injuries or illnesses throw the toes off balance, a crook may stay in place even when the toes are relaxed.

Surgery is one way to relieve the pain of hammertoes. However, Dr. Sullivan offers no-incision and surgery-free pain relief for hammertoes that can be at least minorly adjusted by hand with an in-office procedure known as the flexor tenotomy. This procedure is one of Dr. Sullivan's favorite procedures because the results are immediate. The patient doesn't receive any stitches. The site of the procedure is dressed with a few band-aids and the patient is able to continue on with their day and resume normal activities.

The flexor tenotomy is done using local anesthesia. The procedure involves piercing the skin on the bottom of the toe beneath the deformed joint and releasing the tendon that's keeping the toe contracted. After the tendon is released, the toe is dressed and splinted with two or three band-aids.

The results are often dramatic. The toe that once only touched the ground at its tip will now lay flatter and the patient's pain will be dramatically less or no pain at all. After the procedure the toe will still look bent when at rest, but will flatten when the patient stands. Since the patient doesn't have surgery, they don't have to worry about serious complications and they are able to save thousands of dollars.

Meko admits she was skeptical when she read about the flexor tenotomy procedure. She couldn't believe what she read - no pain, no operating room, no general anesthesia and she wouldn't have to wear a surgical boot for weeks following the procedure. "It seemed too good to be true, but it was!" Meko stated.

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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: 7:30 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



Foot Funnies

Why did the basketball team hire a podiatrist? To help with the agony of da feet!



"I have told several people about Dr. Sullivan and this procedure," said Meko. "To be able to have the procedure done in the office and walk out with only an exercise to do and no pain is marvelous! I hated wearing the boot for several weeks following my prior hammertoe surgery."

The no-incision, surgery-free flexor tenotomy procedure has made a big difference in Meko's life. "No pain after the procedure and I can now wear any shoes that I want. My toes no longer turn under."

Meko was so happy to be out of pain and with her results that she is confident in referring future patients to Westfield Foot and Ankle. "I would recommend to anyone having foot or ankle problems to call Dr. Sullivan first," Meko said.

Welcome Spring but Watch Out for Heel Pain

It's time to get out of the house and enjoy warm weather activities like walking and running. But be cautious! Sudden increased activity following a winter of inactivity can result in unwanted heel pain, also known as plantar fasciitis.

This painful condition results from inflammation of the band of tissue (the plantar fascia) that extends from the heel to the toes. Starting repetitive activities such as a new exercise routine, even continuous standing or walking on a daily basis, can put a lot of stress and strain on the ligaments in the foot, resulting in the inflammation and pain.

The good news is heel pain can be cured. The key to success in eliminating the pain is early treatment; heel pain can become chronic and debilitating if not cared for properly. Our office can help you find relief with therapies including:

- anti-inflammatory medications
- stretching exercises
- orthotic devices
- physical therapy
- footwear modifications
- MLS Laser Therapy
- activity limitations



Although most patients with plantar fasciitis respond to non-surgical treatment, a small percentage of patients may require surgery. If, after several months of non-surgical treatment, you continue to have heel pain, surgical options can be discussed.

Don't let heel pain stop you from enjoying the beauty of spring. If you are suffering from heel pain, make an appointment with our office so you can resume your healthy, active lifestyle.

Article courtesy of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons

Keep Your Child's Feet in the Game

Spring soccer season will soon be in full swing; don't let your child be sidelined by toe pain. Tight or hand-me-down cleats combined with repetitive kicking can lead to painful ingrown toenails. It's a common condition among all age groups, especially children. A nail becomes ingrown when its corners or sides grow into the skin of the toe, causing discomfort, redness, swelling and sometimes infection.

While tight shoes or socks and incorrect nail trimming are the usual cause of ingrown toenails, sometimes children inherit the tendency for nails to curve.

You can help prevent this painful condition by following a few simple tips:

- Make sure children's sports and day-to-day shoes fit properly. Improper shoe width often contributes to ingrown toenails. It is important for the widest part of the shoe to match the widest part of your child's foot.
- Teach children how to trim their toenails properly. Toenails should be trimmed straight across and not cut too short.
- Make it a habit to check your children's feet starting at a young age. Oftentimes kids hide their foot pain from their parents.

If your child develops an ingrown nail, the only permanent cure is with a minor procedure performed at our office.

Warm Weather Walking Checklist

Don't let foot pain slow you down from enjoying the great weather!



The arrival of warm weather is a great time to get up off the couch and on the way to better health. Don't let foot pain slow you down. Follow these helpful tips for your warm weather walks and enjoy the weather!

- Wear supportive shoes.
- Wear 'moisture wicking' socks.
- Stretch muscles before and after your walk. If you've been inactive over the winter, don't overdo it. Gradually work into a walking program.
- Walkers can frequently experience heel pain, especially if you've been inactive during the winter months. Often ibuprofen and daily stretching exercises can provide relief.
- If you experience pain in your heels or ankles make an appointment with our office for a proper evaluation.

Information courtesy of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons



Don't ever try to dig the nail out or cut it off yourself. These dangerous "bathroom surgeries" carry a high risk for infection.

As always, we are here to provide care for your entire family. If you have questions about your child's feet, don't hesitate to contact our office.

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.