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**Step Ahead Foot & Ankle Clinic**

**Morton's Neuroma**

Morton's neuroma is an enlarged nerve that usually occurs in the third inter-space between the third and fourth toes but can occur elsewhere. A better name would be perineural fibroma. The term neuroma implies a cancer, which is incorrect. Problems often develop in this area because the nerve is naturally larger in this part of the foot due to the combining the lateral and medial nerve branches. There is also more motion between the 3rd and 4th metatarsals when walking due to normal anatomy. The nerve lies just above the fat pad of the foot below a structure called the deep transverse inter metatarsal ligament. With each step, the ground pushes up on the enlarged nerve and the ligament pushes down, causing compression and pain. A neuroma is more common in women possibly because women wear confining shoes with high heels. The most common symptom is localized pain or numbness described as electrical, sleepy sensations and some state it feels as if they are walking on a bunched up sock. The pain can be sharp or dull, and is worsened by wearing shoes and by walking. Pain usually is less severe when the foot is not bearing weight. Some patients states that when walk I just need to take off my shoes and stretch my toes. Conservative treatments include, cortisone & sclerosing injections, oral medications, therapy, wearing wider shoes, orthotics. Surgical correction includes excision of the painful nerve or inter metatarsal nerve decompression. The surgery is minor and completed on an ambulatory outpatient basis. As is always the case, conservative treatments should be exhausted prior to considering an invasive surgical correction.