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**Step Ahead Foot & Ankle Clinic**

**Sesamoiditis**

Sesamoiditis is a painful inflammation of one of the two sesamoid bones located under the big toe. It is a common condition that can affect all age groups. The pain may be constant, or it may occur with or be aggravated by, movement and accompanied by swelling. The sesamoid bones are similar to the kneecap, free floating and embedded in the flexor hallucis brevis tendon, under the big toe. These bones have two principal functions. One is to absorb the tremendous shearing and impact forces in the forefoot during walking. The tendons and ligaments in this area are very complex and are collectively known as the sesamoid apparatus. These attachments function to push the big toe into the ground causing the arch to shorten, become higher and lock when the heel leaves the ground. Conservative treatment begins with rest, immobilization and or casting. Reduction of pressures on the affected area is paramount. Metatarsal or aperture pads, rocker bottom shoes, metatarsal bars and custom orthotics can be all successful. Anti-inflammatory drugs and cortisone injections can also be quite effective. This bone can also be fractured or abnormal such as a bipartite sesamoid. Severe or recalcitrant pain and disability can lead to sesamoidectomy, which is rare. Excision of a sesamoid bone can compromise foot function or cause a bunion.