

Sesamoid Injury: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Under the main joint of your big toe are two pea-sized bones called sesamoids (say "SEH-suh-moyds"). They work with other bones, muscles, and tendons to help your toe and foot work correctly.

Sometimes the force from walking, running, or jumping causes these bones to break. Or the tendons around these bones may get irritated and inflamed over time. When the tendons get inflamed, it's called sesamoiditis (say "SEH-suh-moy-DY-tis").

A sesamoid injury is usually treated with proper shoes or with shoe inserts. Some people need to have their toe joint taped, or they need to wear a walking cast for a few weeks. The tape or cast keeps the joint from moving while it heals. Your doctor may give you a shot of steroid medicine in the foot to relieve pain and inflammation.

Some people will need to wear a hard cast that is not removable. They'll need to stay off of their feet for a while. Some people need surgery to repair the bone.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Rest and protect your foot. Take a break from any activity that may cause pain.
- Wear shoes that have low or flat heels and good arch supports. Don't wear tight, narrow, or high-heeled shoes.
- Use moleskin or another type of cushion to pad the area.
- If you have crutches, a cast, or special tape, follow your doctor's instructions for care and use.
- Put ice or a cold pack around your toe for 10 to 20 minutes at a time as needed. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Prop up your foot on a pillow when you ice your toe or anytime you sit or lie down. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.
- Ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
- Return to your usual activity slowly, as you feel better.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

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