

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

Common Athletic Injury - Turf Toe

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

During the football season there is a term that comes up frequently that most people don't understand. They have heard it, but that's about it. Unless of course you are a player and then you have experienced it.

Turf Toe

It sounds sort of simple and benign doesn't it? But it can wreck your season and it is very painful.

It is a sprain of the big toe joint nearest the ball of the foot. Everybody in athletics calls it "Turf Toe".

It is more common on artificial turf fields than grass it seems. But it can occur on a hard court, too.

Mechanism

If the player rolls with force onto the toes so that the joint bends beyond normal, the ligaments of the big toe stretch and tear. Double ouch! You have "Turf Toe".

Sports

It is most common in football and soccer. Turf Toe is occasionally seen in baseball, tennis and basketball.

Swimmers don't need to worry about it!!

Symptoms

It is super painful almost immediately. You can barely walk on the outside of the foot. Swelling follows soon after. The big toe joint is tender and movement is limited. Bruising is present the next day. Normal walking is impossible.

Treatment

You have to give up and keep it elevated for 2 days. Ice for 20 minutes 3 times per day works.

When I see Turf Toe I always need to have x-rays taken to rule out a fracture.

- Aircast walking brace (mid leg version) to protect the foot for 1 - 2 weeks
- One crutch to keep some weight off
- Pain medication
- May not be able to run for 4 - 6 weeks (or more)

What Else?

The time out of your sport and length of treatment depends on the severity of the injury.

Coaches usually don't understand why it takes "so long" to get back.

A trainer might be able to tape or immobilize the toe to get the player back a little sooner.

Other than giving up your sport there is nothing you can do to prevent it.

Conservative treatment works 99% of the time.

Office Website and Argus Orthopaedic Archive

For a tremendous amount of musculoskeletal and Orthopaedic surgery information check out the office website www.orthopodsurgeon.com which also takes you to Your Orthopaedic Connection. It contains a huge amount of Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information.

In addition, the website has the archive of every article I have written for you in Shepherd Argus. All the articles are listed from most recent back to the first one! Check it out for interesting articles you may have missed.

I appreciate all of you loyal readers and patients, present and future and welcome all newcomers!

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush