

[Back to Health A to Z](#)

Pain in the top of the foot

Pain in the top of your foot will often get better in a few weeks. See your GP if it does not improve.

Easing pain in the top of your foot

If you see your GP, they'll usually suggest trying these things:

Do

- ✓ rest and raise your foot when you can
- ✓ put an ice pack (or bag of frozen peas) in a towel on the painful area for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours
- ✓ wear wide comfortable shoes with a low heel and soft sole
- ✓ use soft insoles or pads you put in your shoes
- ✓ try to lose weight if you're overweight
- ✓ try regular gentle stretching exercises
- ✓ take paracetamol

Don't

- ✗ do not take ibuprofen for the first 48 hours after an injury
- ✗ do not wear high heels or tight pointy shoes

Ask your pharmacist about:

- the best painkiller to take
- insoles and pads for your shoes
- treatments for common skin and nail problems
- if you need to see a GP

When to contact your GP

Contact your GP if:

- the pain is severe or stopping you from doing normal activities
- the pain is getting worse or keeps coming back
- the pain has not improved after treating it at home for 2 weeks
- you have any tingling or loss of sensation in your foot
- you have diabetes – foot problems can be more serious if you have diabetes

► [What we mean by severe pain](#)

When to go to the emergency department (ED)

Go to your nearest ED if you:

- are in severe pain
- feel faint, dizzy or sick from the pain
- have a foot that has changed shape or is at an odd angle
- heard a snap, grinding or popping noise at the time of injury
- are not able to walk

These might be signs of a broken bone after an injury.

Causes of pain in the top of the foot

Common causes of pain in the top of your foot are exercising too much or wearing shoes that are too tight.

Your symptoms may help you find the cause of your foot pain.

Some of the possible causes of pain in the top of the foot:

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Symptoms Pain, swelling, bruising, started after intense or repetitive exercise

Possible cause sprained metatarsal or stress fracture

Symptoms Pain, swelling and stiffness that lasts a long time, a grating or crackling sensation when you move the foot, a lump along a tendon

Possible cause tendonitis or osteoarthritis

Symptoms Red, hot, swollen skin, sudden or severe pain when anything touches your foot, the pain usually starts near the bottom of the big toe

Possible cause gout

Do not worry if you're not sure what the problem is.

Follow the advice on this page and see your GP if the pain does not get better in 2 weeks.

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