Pain on the ball of the foot is very common and there are many causes

**What is a Mortons neuroma?**
Mortons neuroma is an irritation and swelling of the nerve which runs between the metatarsals. It is commonest between the 3rd and 4th toes but also occurs between the 2nd and 3rd toes.

**What is intermetatarsal bursitis?**
This is inflammation of a small fluid filled sac that lies between the metatarsal heads. The bursa becomes swollen and can cause pressure on the nerve in the web space.

**What are the symptoms?**
Symptoms for both Morton’s neuroma and intermetatarsal bursitis are similar. Patients report pain on the sole of the foot as if they are walking on a pebble. They may experience a burning sensation and become aware of reduced sensation in the web space between the toes. Symptoms are worse with walking and in narrow shoes.

**What investigations are required?**
The diagnosis is made by clinical evaluation. Ultrasound scanning is helpful in delineating whether it is a neuroma or bursitis. In some cases MRI may be useful.

**What is the non surgical treatment?**
Treatment for both conditions is similar.
- Pain relief
- Activity modification
- Wearing wider shoes with less heel
- Metatarsal dome or bar orthotic which opens up the space between the metatarsals and reduces symptoms
- Steroid injection – this is successful in providing long term relief in approximately 50% of patients. This can be repeated.

**What is the surgical treatment?**
Surgery is reserved for when symptoms have not responded to non surgical treatment.

Surgery involves an incision on the top of the foot in the web space. In intermetatarsal bursitis the bursa +/- nerve is resected. In a Morton’s neuroma the nerve is removed. This causes permanent numbness in the web space and down the side of the toes.
What does the rehabilitation involve?

- This is day surgery
- For the first 2 weeks you should keep your foot elevated as much as possible to minimize swelling
- You can begin weightbearing immediately in a post operative shoe. This shoe is to be worn for 2-4 weeks
- By 6 weeks you will be back to most daily activities
- 3 months for final result and a return to wearing normal shoes

How long will I be off work?
This is dependent upon your occupation

- Seated job 2-3 weeks
- Standing job 4-6 weeks
- Heavy lifting job 8-12 weeks

When can I drive?
If you have a manual car you will be unable to drive whilst in the post op shoe

If you have an automatic car you can drive after 2 weeks if you have your left foot corrected. If you have your right foot corrected you are unable to drive until you are out of the post op shoe.

What are the risks of the procedure?

General risks of surgery
- Infection and wound healing problems
- Scar sensitivity
- Blood clots to the leg
- Anaesthetic problems
- Incomplete resolution of symptoms

Specific risks for Mortons neuroma surgery
- Numbness in the web space in all cases
- Recurrence of neuroma
- 20% risk of no improvement
- Small risk of being made worse

This information is an overview of the management of Mortons neuroma and intermetatarsal bursitis and is not all inclusive.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Mr. Curry's rooms on (03) 9928 6188