

WHERE DOES IT HURT?

THE HEEL PAIN CENTERS

"We'll heal your heels."



Heel Pain

Dr. Ron Freireich, of *The Heel Pain Centers*, reveals which ailments cause heels to hurt and how he can stop the pain—now.

by **Nina PolienLight**

Nearly 40% of Americans with foot problems experience heel pain.

"Many people think erroneously that they have a heel spur and don't do much about it," says Dr. Ron Freireich of *The Heel Pain Centers*. "But some untreated heel problems can lead to tendon tearing or rupturing, ulceration, callus build-up and other conditions."



Dr. Ron Freireich says that the most common cause of heel pain is inflammation of soft tissue running from the heel to the base of the toes. Swelling may be caused by foot structure (flat feet), excessive weight, increased activity, and standing or walking on hard surfaces.

Depending on the severity, doctors may recommend wearing insoles, heel supports, custom orthotics, night splints or firm-heeled shoes. Avoiding barefoot walking. Applying ice, stretching, physical therapy, cortisone shots, shock wave treatments and anti-inflammatory medications may provide additional relief.

"Surgery is only used as a last resort," the doctor assures.

Posterior Tibial Tendonitis

Inflammation on the inner side of the ankle causes heel pain, primarily in overweight or older individuals or those with overly

pronated or flat feet. Like plantar fasciitis, remedies include over-the-counter or custom orthotics, splints, avoiding barefoot walking, stretching and applying ice. Additional comfort comes from shoes with proper arch supports, soft or hard casts and non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs.

Achilles Tendonitis

Tight calf muscles, bone spurs, age, injury or primary tendonitis promote this condition marked by irritation on the large tendon at the back of the ankle.

"Insoles, heel supports, heel lifts and custom orthotics are good treatments," Dr. Freireich says, adding that stretching and taking anti-inflammatory drugs can complement the regimen.

Fat Pad Thinning

Wearing away of fat pads on the sole is more prevalent in older adults. Obesity, walking on hard surfaces and prolonged standing contribute to the condition. Wearing gel heels, cushioned soles and supportive heels offer relief.

Regardless of the source, no one should accept heel pain. "We can reduce or eliminate many types of heel pain," Dr. Freireich says. "Make an appointment at the first sign of discomfort because early intervention increases the likelihood of a better outcome."

The Heel Pain Centers are at 28790 Chagrin Boulevard, in Beachwood, and 18660 Bagley Road, in Middleburg Heights. Call 216-591-1905 for Beachwood and 440-243-1473 for Middleburg Heights. The web address is www.theheelpaincenters.com.