



# Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) for Long Term Treatment of Morton's Neuroma

Dr Iain Bell, Specialist Musculoskeletal Medicine Physician, is able to offer this minimally invasive and effective treatment at an affordable cost

## The Procedure:

- Posterior tibial and superficial peroneal local anaesthetic nerve blocks are performed
- Then, under ultrasound guidance, a RFA cannula attached to a RF generator is inserted into the web space and into the area of the neuroma. Controlled pulses of radiofrequency energy are delivered, causing thermal ablation of the neuroma
- Total procedure time: 1 hour

Post procedure, rest and elevation is advised for the rest of the day. Patients can return to light, intermittent weightbearing activity the following day. For those with more strenuous weightbearing occupations, 4-5 days off is advised.



## What does the research say?

Research suggests that ultrasound guided radiofrequency ablation is associated with high patient satisfaction scores and long-term pain relief (full references available on request):

**Study 1:** 52 patients treated. Average pain score pre-procedure was 9/10. At one year, average pain score was 2/10 (Masala, Cuzzolino, Morini, Raguso, & Fiori, 2018).

**Study 2:** 26 neuromas in 22 patients were treated. Pre-procedure, median pain was reported as 8/10. At 6-8 months post procedure, median pain score was 1/10. (Shah, Ahmad, Hanu-Cernat, & Choudhary, 2019).

**Study 3:** 30 feet in 25 patients were treated. Average number of treatments required was 1.6. Average pre-procedure pain score was 6/10, dropping to 1.7/10 post procedure. Average overall symptom improvement was 76%. 10% eventually required surgery. (Chuter, Chua, Connell, & Blackney, 2013).



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## Referring your patient for RFA

Referring your patient is easy. If a diagnosis of symptomatic Morton's Neuroma has been confirmed, you can refer your patient directly for the procedure.

- Imaging (US or MRI) confirming the neuroma/s is required. Please include imaging results in your referral.
- Please advise if your patient is taking any blood thinners, has any skin problems (such as fungal rash, infection etc) involving the region, is diabetic, or has a pacemaker or implantable defibrillator

Once a referral is received, Dr Bell will conduct a brief telephone consult with your patient to discuss the procedure and answer any questions. A date for the procedure is then scheduled.



## Risks

RFA for Morton's Neuroma is safe and effective.

Risks of the procedure include:

- Infection at the procedure site
- Bruising or haematoma formation
- Thermal burn to skin (very rare)
- Nerve damage causing pain (very rare)
- Procedure failure, or partial relief - occasionally a repeat procedure is required

A side effect of the procedure is that the patient is left with numbness in the distribution of the digital nerves treated.



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