



- Podiatry:
Foot & Ankle



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Dr. Brendan McConnell

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Dr. Brendan McConnell has been recognized by Hampton Roads Magazine in the “Top Docs” issue for several years. As a Board Certified, American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery Fellow, Dr. McConnell has been practicing foot and ankle surgery and podiatric medicine on the Peninsula since 1987. He specializes in the medical and surgical management of the foot and ankle.

A No-Pin Solution to Forefoot Pain

There are many conditions that can result in pain in the forefoot, including but not limited to tendinitis, arthritis, bursitis, irritated nerves, fractures, stress fractures, and bone spurs. A frequent location of pain in the ball of the foot is the second toe and metatarsal. Mechanical imbalance between the great toe joint (worse if a bunion is present) and second toe/ second metatarsal can result in a wear and tear syndrome in which the joint capsule/ligaments of the second toe can cause pain and swelling. The excess stress on the second toe and metatarsal can cause the joint ligaments to microscopically tear and in some cases

fully tear the joint ligaments. This can result in the second toe buckling and crossing toward the great toe. It is common to have significant pain and swelling in the ball of the foot with difficulty walking and taking a full propulsive step.

“The key to successful treatment starts with an accurate diagnosis. This puts you on the road toward solving the problem. If treatment is started early with tape splints, ice, physical therapy, and better shoes, the condition can be conservatively controlled and resolved,” says Brendan McConnell, DPM, FACFAS, a podiatrist at Hampton Roads Orthopaedics Spine & Sports Medicine. However, left untreated,



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the second toe can start to splay, crossing toward the big toe. Dr. McConnell says once crossover hammertoe deformity becomes established, the only effective treatment is surgery.

In the past, surgical solutions for the second toe and second metatarsal

required placing a metal pin/wire in the toe. Unfortunately, this pin would protrude out of the toe, slowing down rehabilitation. “The pin, called a K wire, acts as a splint,” says Dr. McConnell. “But people could bump them and get into all sorts of misadventures, slowing down their ability

Dr. McConnell discussing a no-pin solution to her forefoot pain.

to rehabilitate. They also couldn’t get their foot wet for four to six weeks.”

Dr. McConnell has used an advanced approach over the last 10 years to treating crossover toe/hammertoe/metatarsal joint pain that uses no pins and allows for a faster recovery. During this procedure, he shifts the metatarsal position, transfers a toe tendon to a new location, and then places an internal implant into the toe joint to help stabilize and support the bone without any pins. “It’s a very effective treatment,” Dr. McConnell says. “You can get your foot wet after two weeks and start physical therapy earlier.”

Dr. McConnell says the new procedure offers more consistent results and pain relief for his patients. These improvements help his patients enjoy a better, faster recovery so they can get back on their pain-free feet.



Before: Painful second toe crossover toe deformity out of alignment.



After: The corrective surgery for crossover toe puts the second toe and second metatarsal in better position without using any pin devices.