

## What is it?

A stress fracture is a small crack in a bone, or severe bruising within a bone. Stress fractures can occur in any bone of the foot, but most commonly in the long metatarsal bones. This is the area of greatest impact on your foot as you push off when you walk or run.

## Symptoms:

- The most common symptom of a stress fracture in the foot is pain
- The pain usually develops gradually and worsens during weight-bearing activity
- Pain that occurs and intensifies during normal, daily activities
- Swelling on the top of the foot
- Tenderness to touch at the site of the fracture
- Possible bruising

## Common Causes?

- Sudden increase in physical activity, this increase can be in the frequency of the activity, such as exercising more days per week. It can also be in the duration or intensity of activity, such as running longer distances
- Even for the non-athlete, a sudden increase in activity can cause a stress fracture. For example, if you walk infrequently on a day-to-day basis but end up walking excessively (or on uneven surfaces) while on holiday, you might experience a stress fracture
- Abnormal foot biomechanics - anything that alters the mechanics of how your foot absorbs impact as it strikes the ground may increase your risk for a stress fracture. For example, if you have a blister or bunion, it can affect how you put weight on your foot when you walk or run
- Incorrect footwear

## Treatment

- The goal of treatment is to relieve pain and allow the fracture to heal
- It is recommended that you use crutches or a non-weight-bearing walking boot to keep weight off your foot until the pain subsides
- Footwear assessment is vital and using a shoe with a stiff midsole is helpful
- Orthotics are used to offload, and correct biomechanics

For further information on your foot health or to discuss treatment options with a podiatrist, please contact your local ModPod Podiatry clinic.