



Foot Facts

with Robert Joseph, D.P.M., Ph.D.

Special
Turf Toe
Edition

Turf Toe, Tough Turf, or Tough Luck?

Now that football season has kicked off again, players on the professional, college and high school level are at risk for a number of foot injuries that can not only end their season, but leave them with lasting injuries. Turf Toe is one of those injuries that affects athletes and sports enthusiasts at all competitive levels.

Dr. Robert Joseph D.P.M., Ph.D. relates that turf toe is caused by injury to the ligaments of the great toe joint when the joint is overstretched. Although it is most commonly associated with football injuries, it can occur with any sport prone to rapid changes in direction of running such as soccer or tennis. Once thought to be related to the unforgiving properties of artificial turf, greater understanding of foot and shoe gear mechanics show improper shoe selection and foot mechanics may also be risk factors for injury.

According to Dr. Joseph, the great toe is associated with several types of sports related injuries than can be difficult for the layman or physician to distinguish. These injuries include fractures of the two small bones of the great toe joint called the sesamoids, rupture of ligaments, or injury to the cartilage of the joint's surface. Evaluation by a foot specialist is not only an integral part in determining the type of injury and treatment, but also guides rehabilitation and proper shoe selection. Use of proper shoe gear can reduce the risk of injury; at times, a carbon fiber foot plate with a Morton's extension can be used to reduce joint strain as an athlete returns to sports after a turf toe injury. Dr. Joseph relates that proper shoe gear selection is not as easy for patients as it once was, given the variety of shoe types, styles and technologies available. Choosing a knowledgeable and reputable shoe store can also make a significant difference helping one get the right type of shoe recommended by your foot and ankle specialist.



**Carbon Fiber
Foot Plate**

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