



## Weekend Doctor

By DR. THOMAS F. VAIL

The most common foot condition that brings patients to my office is heel pain.

Heel pain is caused by the inflammation of the plantar fascia, multiple muscles, the bursa, nerves, and the periosteum under the heel.

For most people, heel pain is at its worst in the morning.

While you're sleeping, your feet rest in a downward, relaxed position, causing your muscles to tighten. When you take your first steps out of bed, stretching these tight muscles can cause pain.

You can also feel heel pain after prolonged standing and walking, which is why many people complain of sore heels after a long day on their feet.

In fact, most people feel more pain after standing than walking, because you have more tension on the plantar fascia while standing than during the actual movement of walking.

Last year alone, I saw almost 200 heel pain patients, and while I only performed heel surgery on about 1 percent of them, that was 1 percent too many!

Even though heel surgery is simple to perform, the recovery period can be long.

After heel surgery, the patient's foot is in a cast for four weeks before he or she will need extensive rehabilitation for two to four months.

Three years ago, I learned something that surprised many foot and ankle specialists: chronic inflammation can lead to the death of cells.

In light of this new discovery, I began injecting Autologous Platelet Concentrates into chronically inflamed areas with great success, as did many other doctors.

Your blood's platelets contain growth factors. This injection isolates the platelets from each patient's own blood and is then re-injected into the area of chronic inflammation.

With this therapy, recovery time is only two weeks. Plus, it has no side effects since it is the patient's own blood that we re-inject.

In addition, a local anesthetic is used on the injection site, so there is minimal pain. The entire procedure only takes about 15 minutes.

After this therapy, patients are required to wear a Cam Walker, also known as a walking boot, for two weeks. Healing continues over the next several weeks.

Also, the therapy can be repeated.

So far, this technique has been used for many kinds of chronic inflammation, such as chronically inflamed wounds, bones and tendons.

If you have any type of heel pain syndrome, an injection may be a great non-surgical approach to get you back to enjoying life's activities.



Vail

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