



Tarsal Tunnel Decompression



Overview

This surgical procedure relieves pressure on the tibial nerve. This nerve passes through a space called the tarsal tunnel, which is found just behind the bony bump on the inner side of the ankle. The nerve can become compressed in this tunnel.

Preparation

In preparation for the procedure, you are given general anesthesia. A small incision is made in the skin on the inner side of your ankle to expose the flexor retinaculum. This is a thick band of fibrous tissue. It forms the outer wall of the tarsal tunnel.

Releasing the Nerve

The surgeon carefully cuts this tissue along the path of the nerve. This allows the tissue to stretch. It creates more open space inside the tarsal tunnel, relieving pressure on the tibial nerve. The surgeon examines nearby structures to make sure nothing else is pressing against the nerve. In some cases, other areas along the nerve's path may be treated. The surgeon may decide to free the two main branches of the tibial nerve that travel along the arch of the foot. The surgeon may choose to free the smaller branches, which travel into the heel.

End of Procedure

When the procedure is complete, the incision is closed. Your foot is bandaged, and you may wear a splint or a postoperative shoe. You will be monitored for a brief time before you are allowed to go home. You may be asked to temporarily refrain from putting weight on the foot after the surgery. Your doctor will give you specific instructions to aid your recovery.