

GRETCHEN

RECIPIENT OF: AMNION TISSUE



PUTTING THE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD AFTER TISSUE TRANSPLANT

Struggling to find the right shoe is an experience most people can relate to, yet for Gretchen McGoffin wearing the wrong shoes led to constant discomfort and burning pain.

“In researching my diagnosis I discovered the cause of a Morton’s neuroma is typically from wearing the wrong shoes all my life; the real culprit is high heels that restrict the toes,” said Gretchen.

Her condition, known as Morton’s Neuroma, is described by the Mayo Clinic as: a thickening of the tissue around one of the nerves leading to your toes. This can cause a sharp, burning pain in the ball of your foot. Your toes also may sting, burn or feel numb.

Over the past 10 years, Gretchen visited several podiatrists complaining of a sharp pain in the ball of her right foot, a pain most closely resembling an electric shock. After several pairs of custom orthotics for her shoes and multiple steroid injections, Gretchen was no longer able to ease her pain. The discomfort had become a persistent and constant presence in her life, no matter what shoes she was wearing, so she consulted podiatrist and surgeon, Dr. Alan Ng.

“I had an MRI, which revealed not one but two Morton’s neuromas in my right foot. The larger one was between the second and third toes and a smaller one between my third and fourth toes,” said Gretchen.

Upon review of the MRI, Dr. Ng recommended surgical removal of the neuromas, one procedure at a time, due to

an underlying circulation condition that could have caused further complications for Gretchen. His plan was to remove the larger neuroma first and then wrap the end of the nerve with AlloWrap® DS, an allograft made from the lining of a human amniotic sac, which can be donated following cesarean-section births.

This was Dr. Ng’s first time using amniotic tissue for this particular procedure, but he was confident that by using it to wrap the end of the nerve where the neuroma had been he would be able to prevent scar tissue from forming, which can cause pain at the surgery site.



“The recovery from the first neuroma removal was swift with little pain. I wore a surgical shoe for a couple of weeks, then loose fitting shoes for the next several weeks, at which point I could walk with no pain and resumed light exercise. Around week eight I was given the approval to resume all normal activity,” said Gretchen.

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Gretchen’s procedure was a success and despite the remaining smaller neuroma she is currently able to walk pain-free and enjoys an active lifestyle including hiking, aerobics, yoga and even the occasional high heel. She is eternally grateful for donation since the process assisted in restoring her life back to normal.

Prior to her surgery, Gretchen was familiar with the notion of tissue donation due to her work at AlloSource, one of the largest tissue banks in the country.

“I made the decision to be an organ and tissue donor many years ago. Only after receiving my donated tissue and through working at AlloSource have I discovered how important and impactful that decision is,” said Gretchen.

For Gretchen, the future is bright. She is in the process of consulting with Dr. Ng about surgery to remove the second neuroma, a similar procedure for which AlloWrap will be used again. She is also excited and thankful to be become a second time tissue recipient.

