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Haglund's Deformity (Pump Bump)

A Haglund's deformity is an enlargement of the back of the heel (calcaneus) that causes irritation and pain due to rubbing from shoes. The bony prominence, the enlargement, is usually a developmental variance in the shape of the bone; it is sometimes due to a change in the position of the foot in which there is inversion of the heel. The enlargement on the back of the heel, usually toward the outer side of the foot, is very easily irritated by the stiff, reinforced heel counter of shoes. This especially happens with the pump type of shoe, thus the term *pump bump*.

The rubbing initially causes irritation and blisters on the skin. As the pressure continues, though, inflammation of the deeper tissues develops, with increasing pain and swelling. Eventually a knot of inflamed tissue develops in this area. This is formed by a combination of the enlarged bone, the thickened, irritated skin, the swelling of deeper tissues, and possibly a bursitis between the bone and the skin. As the irritation from the shoe continues, the knot becomes larger and more painful.

Self-treatment of the pump bump involves avoiding shoes that irritate the heel area and applying protective padding to prevent irritation. Foam or felt padding can be placed around the bump and then covered with moleskin to protect the area. A heel cup may also help keep pressure off the area. It may also help to change styles of shoes so that the heel pressure is off the area. The contact point of the heel counter against the bump can also be

changed by placing a heel pad in the shoe to slightly raise the heel.

If relief cannot be obtained with the above self-treatment then professional help may be needed. Professional treatment may involve several approaches. Initially, shoe modifications and a different type of padding may be tried. If the area is very swollen and tender, a course of physical therapy may be indicated. A cortisone injection to obtain quicker relief may be considered. In cases in which a particular foot type (such as a high arch) places the heel in an abnormal position, an orthotic device can help to alleviate the pressure by changing the position of the heel.

When conservative measures fail to provide relief, surgical excision of the enlarged portion of the heel bone should be considered. This procedure can be done safely on an outpatient basis under local anesthesia. Recovery time varies with the extent of bone which must be removed; therefore, the expected results, recovery, and options should be discussed with the surgeon.

Prevention of a recurrence of the pump bump requires proper shoe selection, avoiding a heel counter that irritates the area, and, in cases in which a certain foot type contributes to the problem, using an orthotic device.

The Haglund's deformity or pump bump can develop into a very painful problem for the athlete. Fortunately, most of these respond to conservative treatment; for the persistent cases, surgical correction is available.

