

Davison woman walks painfree, thanks to new minimally invasive surgery for plantar fasciitis

Six months before her daughter's wedding, college professor Karen Conover developed plantar fasciitis. "I had excruciating heel pain," she recalls. "From the time I got out of bed in the morning to the time I went to bed at night, I lived with the pain. I went through the whole business ... orthotic shoe inserts, lots of cortisone shots, and physical therapy for several months. Nothing relieved the pain. Surgery wasn't an option for me because I didn't want to be in a cast for my daughter's wedding ... What I remember most about her wedding was my pain. By the end of the night, I was almost crippled."

As the pain rapidly increased, Karen's lifestyle changed just as quickly. "I work at a college campus and just thinking about walking from class to class would make me cringe. I love my classes, but I had to start cutting back. All I thought about was my painful feet. I kept hoping for a magic bullet ... finally I found it at Genesys."

Mark Williams, DPM, podiatrist on staff at Genesys, conducted a new, minimally invasive technique called endoscopic plantar fasciotomy (EPF). During a 15-minute outpatient procedure, Dr. Williams made two ½ centimeter incisions on the side of Karen's heel, and inserted a special scope and camera under the plantar fascia (a ligament-like band of tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot) that guided the podiatrist as he cut part of the fascia near Karen's heel bone,

releasing the tightness that was causing her pain. As the foot heals, new tissue fills in the gap where the fascia was cut. This lengthens the fascia, reduces strain during foot movement and completely eliminates pain.

Patients usually can wear their own shoes in three to five days with no cast or crutches needed

According to Dr. Williams, individuals suffer from plantar fasciitis when the plantar fascia becomes too tight and tears on the bone, causing a chronic dull ache with episodes of sharp, shooting pain in the heel.

"I was expecting Dr. Williams to slice my whole heel from side to side and I'd be recuperating for months," Karen says. "But I learned Dr. Williams was trained under the doctor who invented EPF. I was back in my regular shoes in a few days."

Five months later, she returned to Genesys for a repeat procedure on her other foot. "I didn't even need an aspirin after the procedure. The only pain I felt was a little prick in my arm from the IV. My life was handed back to me right away!

"If I had to do it over again, I would choose surgery immediately!" Karen emphasizes. "This procedure should not be the last resort. It should be the first choice! It gave me total relief!"

For more information on endoscopic plantar fasciotomy, call Dr. Williams at (810) 653-9060; or ask your family doctor for a list of podiatrists at Genesys who perform this procedure.



Professor Karen Conover was able to walk around the Baker College campus a few days after surgery for plantar fasciitis (heel spur syndrome). The 15-minute, minimally invasive painfree outpatient surgery at Genesys required only two ½ centimeter incisions along the side of her heel.