Chronic Exertional Compartment Syndrome (CECS)

Also known as exercise induced compartment syndrome, this condition can cause severe pain in the lower leg. Patients typically experience CECS after exercise, which often limits their activity level. Most CECS patients are runners. Fortunately, rest often quickly relieves the symptoms.

The Symptoms of CECS:
- Pain during exercise that is quickly relieved with rest
- Numbness or tingling in the foot or leg
- Tightness over the muscles at the front of the leg

Understanding chronic exertional compartment syndrome.
Muscles are wrapped in a tight tissue known as a fascia. With exercise, the muscle expands as blood flow increases. The fascia normally expands as well. In CECS patients, however, the fascia remains tight during exercise, constricting blood flow to the muscle and causing intense pain.

CECS treatment may involve surgery.
A period of rest may be attempted, as well as avoidance of activities that cause the symptoms. If symptoms persist and there is a clear diagnosis of CECS, surgery may be needed to release the tight fascia. Known as a fasciotomy, it involves making an incision over the affected area and cutting the tight tissue that surrounds the muscle.

Proper diagnosis requires specialized testing.
Summa Physicians: Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine is pleased to offer compartment pressure testing for your patients who you feel may have CECS. After an initial evaluation, we test pre- and post-exercise compartment pressures. If a patient is deemed to have CECS, we will help them obtain an appointment with an orthopaedic surgeon experienced in fasciotomies.

For more information, please call at (330) 379-5051 extension 4 or 888-7-Summa-Sport (888-778-6627).

Next day appointments are available for most sports injuries.