

# Bunion Surgery

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

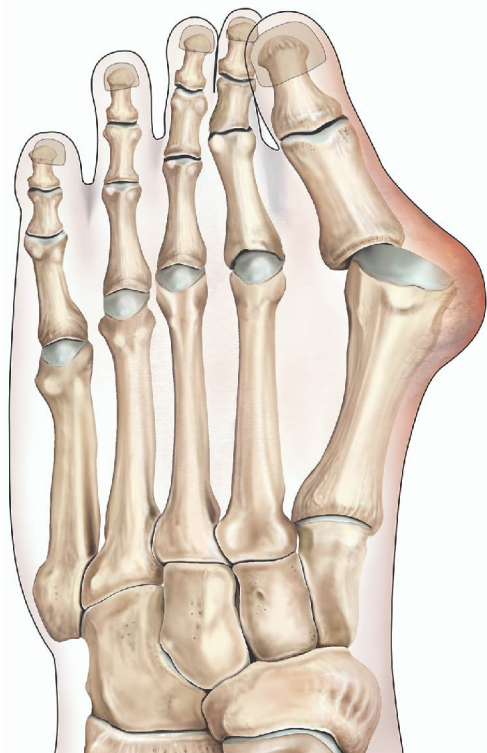
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## What is a bunion?

A bunion is a bony lump on the side of your foot at the base of your big toe.



A bunion on the left foot

A common cause of bunions is wearing tight shoes that squash your toes.

They are sometimes associated with arthritis of the joint at the base of your big toe but many people with bunions have no underlying joint problems.

## What are the benefits of surgery?

Your big toe should be straighter, so your foot should fit more comfortably in a normal shoe.

## Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Putting padding over the bunion or a spacer between your big toe and second toe can help give you relief from the pain caused by the bunion rubbing. Using wide-fitting shoes from a good-quality shoe shop may be enough. If not, the orthotics (surgical appliances) department at the hospital will be able to give you advice about special shoes.

## What does the operation involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible. The operation usually takes 30 minutes to an hour. Your surgeon will discuss with you which of the following procedures the operation is likely to involve.

- Removing the bunion.
- Releasing the tight ligaments and tightening stretched ligaments.
- Cutting and realigning the bones of your big toe.
- Stiffening a joint.
- Straightening one or more of your toes.

## What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and even cause death.

### General complications of any operation

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Unsightly scarring of your skin
- Blood clot in your leg
- Blood clot in your lung
- Difficulty passing urine

### Specific complications of this operation

- Damage to nerves
- Problems with bone healing
- Loss of movement in your big toe
- Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of your foot
- Pain in the ball of your foot
- The deformity coming back

## How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day or the day after.

Spend most of the time during the first week with your leg raised so that the swelling settles.

It can take 6 weeks or longer before the swelling has gone down enough for you to wear a normal soft shoe.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

The swelling often takes up to 6 months to go down completely.

## Summary

If you have a bunion that is causing pressure and pain, surgery should straighten your big toe and make your foot fit more comfortably into a normal shoe.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

### Acknowledgements

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