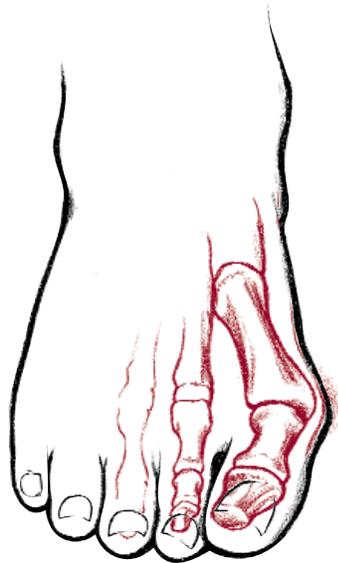


What is a Bunion?

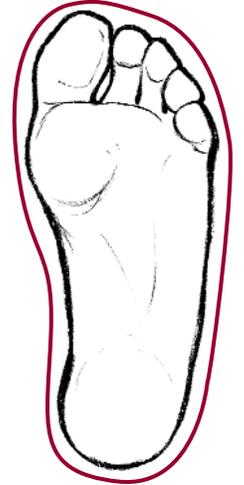
A bunion is a prominence or bump at the base of the great toe. This occurs when the first metatarsal turns inward and the great toe turns outward. Pressure from shoes (is what) causes the prominence to become swollen and painful.



Non-Surgical Treatment

The goal of non-surgical treatment is to relieve the pressure over the bunion caused by the shoe. This may be accomplished by:

- Stretching the leather of the shoe over the bunion.
- Obtaining shoes with a wider toe box or forefoot area.
- If the deformity is severe, prescription shoes may be necessary.



Causes

There is no single cause of a bunion (Hallux Valgus) formation. The following are some examples of some things that could cause bunions:

- **Pressure.** An imbalance of muscle forces on the toe can cause the bunion to develop over time. This is very common.
- **Structure.** Too wide an angle between the first and second metatarsal bones results in an overly wide forefoot.
- **Heredity.** A tendency to form bunions can run in the family.
- **Age.** As we get older, our forefoot spreads out.
- **Flatfeet.** Deforming pressures of weight-bearing and improperly fitted shoes affect flat feet more than normal feet.
- **Poorly fitting shoes.** High heel, pointed toe shoes are not the primary cause of the deformity, but they do cause a bunion to be painful and to appear sooner than it normally would.

Surgical Treatment

- The goal of surgery is to narrow the forefoot as well as realign and balance the great toe.
- There are many different surgical procedures for the correction of bunions. The type of surgery performed depends on the severity of the bunion deformity and your type of foot. X-rays are taken to determine the severity. The doctor will discuss your specific procedure in detail and cover the potential risks and complications. This surgery is usually done on an outpatient basis.
- In most cases, surgery successfully relieves the painful symptoms. After surgery, however, there may be some remaining joint stiffness, numbness, or deformity.
- People often ask if lasers can be used to fix bunions. At this time, there is no successful laser treatment for bunions.

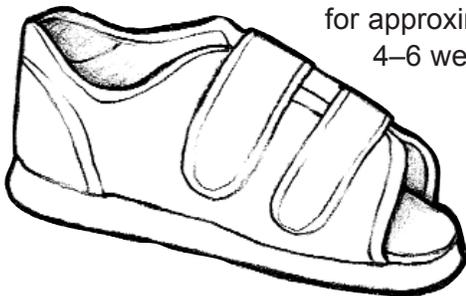
Before Surgery

- The scheduling nurse gives specific instructions. If you have any questions prior to surgery, feel free to call the scheduler.
- Please wash your foot and clean your nails thoroughly on the day of surgery.
- Do not wear nail polish.

After Surgery

- You will have a large dressing on your foot. Keep it clean and dry. Some blood drainage on the dressing is not unusual.
- It is important to rest after surgery with your foot elevated at your heart level. This will decrease pain, swelling, and bleeding.
- Before the numbing medication starts to wear off, begin taking the pain medication prescribed. If you develop a rash or other reactions, stop the medication and call your doctor.
- Taking the pain medication on a more regular basis (i.e., every 3-4 hours) for the first 2 to 3 days after surgery usually results in better pain control than using it only as needed.
- You will be given a postoperative shoe after surgery that protects your bunion repair.

This is usually worn
for approximately
4–6 weeks.



- You should have an appointment approximately one to two weeks after surgery to have your dressing changed and wound inspected.
- If you have a pin in place, you should clean it daily with alcohol and a Q-tip to keep any crusting off the skin and pin.
- The pin is usually removed in the office within 3-6 weeks. Most patients do not feel significant pain when the pin is removed.
- You should anticipate moderate swelling for at least 6 weeks after surgery. The more you elevate your foot, the less swelling there will be. It may take up to a year before all the swelling is gone.
- It is important to remember that shoes with pointed toes and high heels should be avoided as much as possible because they push the great toe back into the bunion position. Select shoes with rounded toe boxes and low heels.
- Foot exercises should be utilized as part of the post-operative rehabilitation. (Ask your doctor for the handout on these foot exercises.)

**The more you
elevate your foot,
the less swelling
there will be.**