

HALLUX-ABDUCTO VALGUS **Bunions**

What Is a Bunion?

Bunions are often described as a bump on the side of the big toe. But a bunion is more than that. The visible bump actually reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot. With a bunion, the big toe leans toward the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead. This throws the bones out of alignment, producing the bunion's "bump."

Bunions are a progressive disorder. They begin with a leaning of the big toe, gradually changing the angle of the bones over the years and slowly producing the characteristic bump, which continues to become increasingly prominent. Usually the symptoms of bunions appear at later stages, although some people never have symptoms



What Causes a Bunion?

A bunion is most often a symptom of faulty mechanics of the foot. The deformity runs in families, but it is the foot type that is hereditary, not the bunion. People with flat feet or low arches are more prone to develop the problem than those with higher arches. Bunions also may be associated with various forms of arthritis. Arthritis can cause the joint's protective covering of cartilage to deteriorate, leaving the joint damaged and with a decreased range of motion.

Parents who have bunions should know that there is a strong hereditary predisposition to bunion development, and should have children evaluated if early signs of deformity and/or discomfort are evident. If the child has the same foot type, there is a possibility that a bunion will eventually develop.

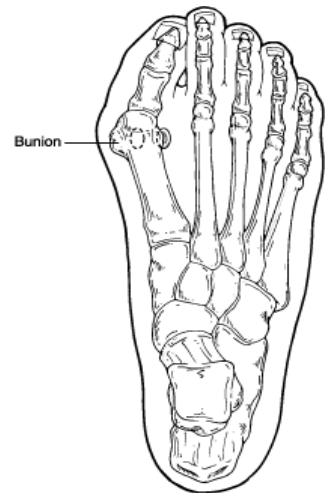
Symptoms

Symptoms occur most often when wearing shoes that crowd the toes, shoes with a tight toe box or high heels. This may explain why women are more likely to have symptoms than men. In addition, spending long periods of time on your feet can aggravate the symptoms of bunions.

Symptoms, which occur at the site of the bunion, may include:

- Pain or soreness
- Inflammation and redness
- A burning sensation
- Perhaps some numbness

Other conditions which may appear with bunions include calluses on the big toe, sores between the toes, ingrown toenail, and restricted motion of the toe.



Treatment

Sometimes observation of the bunion is all that's needed. A periodic office evaluation and x-ray examination can determine if your bunion deformity is advancing, thereby reducing your chance of irreversible damage to the joint. In many other cases, however, some type of treatment is needed.

Early treatments are aimed at easing the pain of bunions, but they won't reverse the deformity itself. These options include:

Changes in footwear. Wearing the right kind of shoes is very important. Choose shoes that have a wide toe box and forgo those with pointed toes or high heels which may aggravate the condition.

Padding. Pads placed over the area of the bunion can help minimize pain. You can get bunion pads from your podiatric surgeon or purchase them at a drug store.

Activity modifications. Avoid activity that causes bunion pain, including standing for long periods of time.

Medications. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may help to relieve pain.

Iceing. Applying an ice pack several times a day helps reduce inflammation and pain.

Injection therapy. Although rarely used in bunion treatment, injections of corticosteroids may be useful in treating the inflamed bursa (fluid-filled sac located in a joint) sometimes seen with bunions.

Orthotic devices. In some cases, custom orthotic devices may be provided by the podiatric surgeon.



Spacer Pad



Night-Splint



Bunion Shield

Surgical Treatment

When conservative treatment does not provide satisfactory relief from symptoms, or when the condition interferes with your activities, surgery may be necessary.

Pain and deformity are significantly reduced in the great majority of patients who undergo bunion surgery. In addition to easing pain, the purpose of bunion surgery is to remove the enlargement and realign the joint to restore function. This means that after surgery, the foot can carry the body's weight properly, and that special shoes are no longer needed. Postoperative orthotics or supportive devices may be recommended to improve foot function.

Bunion surgery is indicated if:

- If there is severe foot pain that limits your activities, especially work and being able to walk when wearing reasonable shoes.
- Chronic inflammation of the big toe is present and doesn't respond to conservative care.
- A significant deformity of the toe (this drifting of the big toe towards the small toes is usually called hallux valgus or hallux abducto valgus).
- The big toe joint is stiff and does not bend so that it interferes with walking.
- There is no pain relief with the use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
- There is a failure to respond to other conservative treatments such as changes in padding, exercises, footwear, etc.

It has been suggested that when it comes to bunion surgery that there are more different surgical techniques for this than there is for any other surgical condition. They range from the "simple" or

"minimal" surgical procedures to the major forefoot reconstructions. The choice of procedure will depend on so many things, all of which will be evaluated and taken into consideration by the podiatric surgeon. Unrealistic expectations can be a common cause of dissatisfaction with bunion surgery. It is important that expectations are realistic. Bunion surgery will help relieve pain and result in an improvement in the alignment of the toe in the vast majority of cases. Bunion surgery will not allow you to wear a narrower shoe or smaller shoes. Tight fitting shoes are a major contributor to bunions in the first place, so returning to this type of footwear is a risk for the bunion reoccurring.

Risks of Bunion Surgery

There are risks associated with any surgery and these should be discussed by the surgeon. About 10 percent of patients experience complications from bunion surgery. These can include:

- infection
- a recurrence of the bunion
- damage to the nerves
- stiffness of the joint
- continued long term pain
- failure of the bone to heal

What Should You Expect After Surgery?

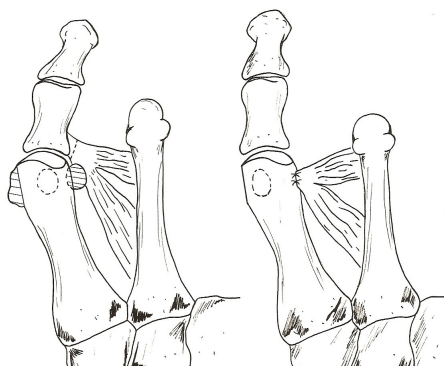
After surgery, the foot may become narrower. Also, for a period of time, the joint may remain slightly stiff and not be as flexible as before the surgery. Gradual return to normal activity will be recommended as healing progresses.

Types of Surgery

Many surgical procedures are used to correct bunions. The decision to employ a procedure is based on the severity of the deformity, the patient's age, the general health of the patient, their activity level, and the general health of the bones and connective tissue.

McBRIDE BUNIONECTOMY

For a mild bunion, the podiatric surgeon may remove the enlarged portion of bone and realign the muscles, tendons and ligaments surrounding the joint.

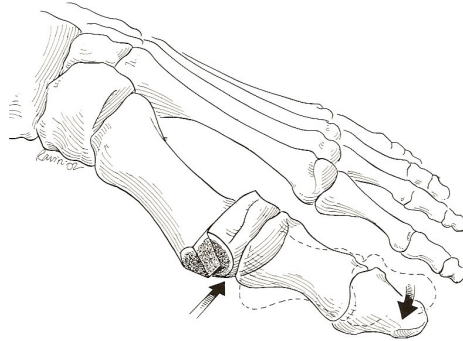


Post-operative Care

- Rest, elevation and ice for the first 3-5 days
- 4 weeks in a post-operative shoe
- Wide fitting shoe for 6 to 12 weeks
- Physical therapy starts at the second or third week to minimize this stiffness, and home exercises are implemented. If these exercises are not performed, a poor result may occur due to excessive stiffness.
- Regular activities can often be resumed at two to three months as tolerated.
- Some swelling may be present for six months or more.

CHEVRON BUNIONECTOMY

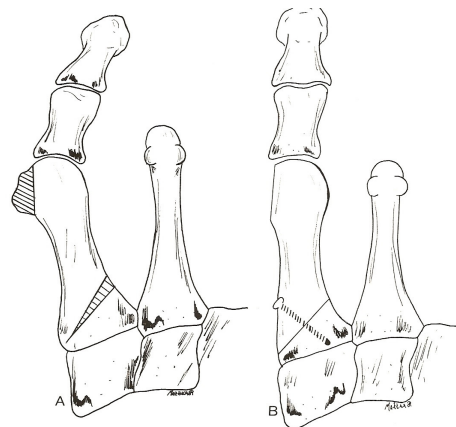
The Chevron bunionectomy is a procedure performed in cases of a mild to moderate bunion deformity. An incision is made over the big toe joint and the bump of bone from the side of the joint is removed. This is performed in a manner so as not to damage the joint and not to leave any irregularities of bone that can cause future irritation in shoes. Once this is completed, an osteotomy (bone cut) is performed through the first metatarsal that will allow shifting the bone and realigning the joint.



Post-operative Care

- Rest, elevation and ice for the first 3-5 days
- 4-6 weeks in a post-operative wooden shoe
- Wide fitting shoe for 6 to 12 weeks
- Physical therapy starts at the second or third week to minimize this stiffness, and home exercises are implemented. If these exercises are not performed, a poor result may occur due to excessive stiffness.
- Regular activities can often be resumed at two to three months as tolerated.
- Some swelling may be present for six months or more.

CLOSING BASE WEDGE BUNIONECTOMY

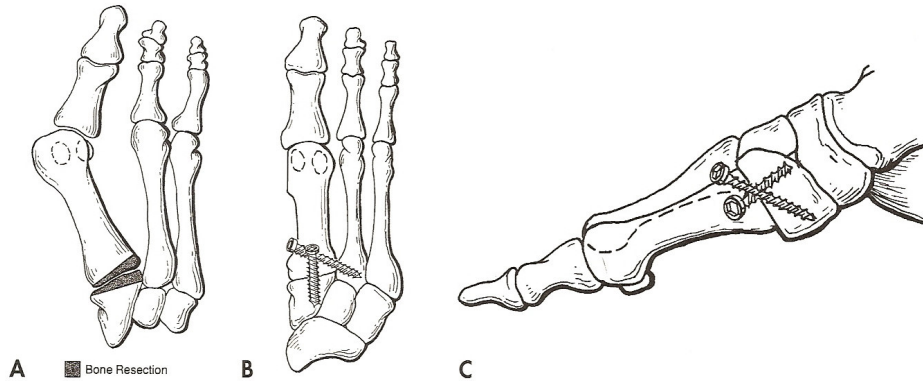


Post-operative Care

- Rest, elevation and ice for the first 3-5 days
- 14 days non-weight bearing in a splint
- 2 to 4 weeks non-weight bearing in below-knee fiberglass cast
- Physical therapy starts once the cast is removed. If these exercises are not performed, a poor result may occur due to excessive stiffness.
- Resume physical activities at 24-30 weeks (as tolerated)
- Some swelling may be present for six months or more.

LAPIDUS BUNIONECTOMY

The Lapidus bunionectomy is a procedure performed in cases of a moderate to severe bunion deformity or when the big toe and first metatarsal are very mobile. An incision is made over the big toe joint and the bump of bone from the side of the first metatarsal head is removed. This is performed in a manner so as not to damage the joint and not to leave any irregularities of bone that can cause future irritation in shoes. Once this is completed, the joint at the base of the first metatarsal is removed along with the joint surface of the bone it articulates with, straightening the angle of the deformity. Two screws are then used to hold the bones in the corrected position.



Post-operative Care

- Rest, elevation and ice for the first 3-5 days
- 14 days non-weight bearing in a splint
- 6 weeks non-weight bearing in below-knee fiberglass cast
- 4 weeks in a weight bearing removable cast
- Physical therapy starts at the second or third week to minimize this stiffness, and home exercises are implemented. If these exercises are not performed, a poor result may occur due to excessive stiffness.
- Resume physical activities at 24-30 weeks (as tolerated)
- Some swelling may be present for six months or more.

COMPLICATIONS OF SURGERY

Possible Complications of Bunion Surgery

There are risks associated with any surgical procedure. About 10 % of patients experience complications from bunion surgery. These can include:

- infection
- a recurrence of the bunion
- failure of the bone to heal
- damage to the nerves
- stiffness of the joint
- continued long term pain
- over correction of the bunion (Hallux Varus)