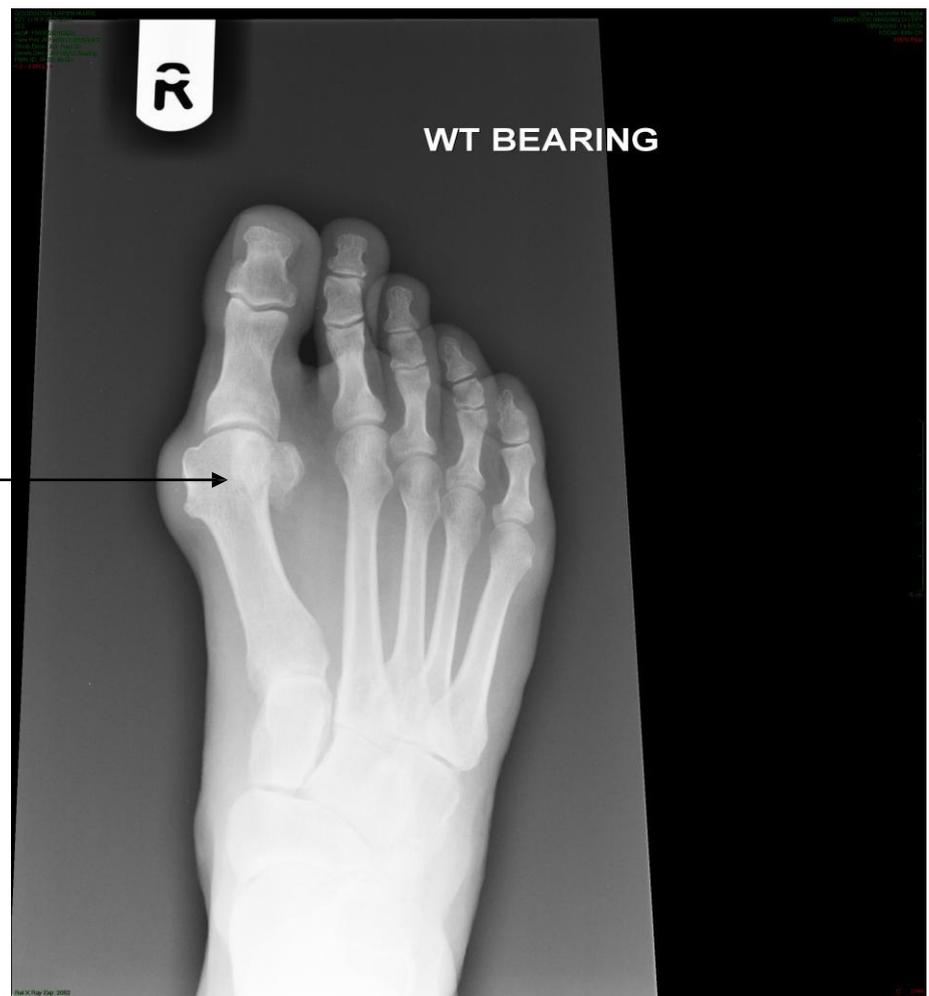


BUNION (HALLUX VALGUS): Patient information Leaflet

What is a Bunion?

Bunion is the prominent bony swelling of the big toe. This develops as the 'metatarsal' bone of the big toe starts pointing towards the inner border of the foot forming the bunion. Gradually the big toe itself drifts towards the second toe.



Metatarsal bone forming bunion

What Causes Bunions?

- 1) By far the most common cause of bunions is the prolonged wearing of *poorly fitting shoes*, usually shoes with a narrow, pointed toe box that squeezes the toes into an unnatural position. *Bunions are nine times more common in women than men.*
- 2) *Heredity* often plays a role in bunion formation & bunions often run in family.
- 3) Bunions also may be caused by *Rheumatoid arthritis*.
- 4) Long standing *flatfeet* can contribute to bunion formation

Can Bunions be prevented?

As most bunions are related to genetic factors it would not be possible to prevent them. However, the rate of progression can be slowed by selecting sensible shoes.

Do all bunions require surgery?

Surgery should not be done for cosmetic reasons and in general if a bunion is not painful it does not require surgery. However, sometimes the bunion might lead to problems related to the lesser toes. *If you have a bunion that does not hurt but your second or third toes have become deformed or painful you should see a specialist.*

Bunion Surgery

If done properly about 90% patients are satisfied after bunion surgery. Most Foot & Ankle specialists agree that the most predictable results are seen by breaking the bone (osteotomy) & fixing it with screws.



SCARF OSTEOTOMY FOR CORECTION OF HALLUX VALGUS

As you explore bunion surgery, be aware that *so-called "simple" or "minimal invasive"* surgical procedures are often inadequate "quick fixes" that can do more harm than good. And beware of unrealistic claims that surgery can give you a "perfect" foot. The goal of surgery is to relieve as much pain, and correct as much deformity as is realistically possible. It is not meant to be cosmetic. Bunion surgery should not be taken lightly & it could take 3-4 months to recover after the operation.

Realistic Expectations About Bunion Surgery

An important factor in deciding whether to have bunion surgery is to understand what the procedure can and can not do. The vast majority of patients who undergo bunion surgery experience a dramatic reduction of foot pain after surgery, along with a significant improvement in the alignment of their big toe.

Bunion surgery will not allow you to wear a smaller shoe size or narrow-pointed shoes. Remember that the main cause of the bunion deformity is a tight fitting shoe. If you return to that type of shoe wear, your bunion will reappear.

The Surgery

Almost all bunion surgery can be done as day case. It can be done under general anaesthetic or regional block. The surgery takes about 70-90 minutes.

Possible Complications After Surgery

Fewer than 10 percent of patients experience complications from bunion surgery. Possible complications can include infection, wound problems, stiffness, swelling (can last for a long time), clot (rarely), delayed union or non union, recurrence of the bunion, nerve damage, and continued pain.

If complications occur, they are treatable but may affect the extent of your full recovery.

Post operative Care

You will be discharged from the hospital with bandages holding your foot. You also will wear a special postoperative surgical shoe (Darco shoe) to protect your foot. You

need to keep this shoe on (even at night) for 6 weeks. Keep your foot elevated most of the time for the first week. Be sure to place a plastic bag over your foot while showering. The wound would be inspected at about 2 weeks. At that stage you would be asked to use a toe spreader (for 6-12 weeks). You would also be advised to move your big toe gently at 2 weeks. Your next appointment would be at 6 weeks when X-rays would be performed.



Bearing Weight

You can gradually put more weight on your foot as your wound heals. However, walk only short distances during the first two weeks following surgery. You will probably be able to drive again within six to twelve weeks.

Swelling and Shoe Wear

Keep your foot elevated as much as possible for the first few days after surgery, and apply ice to relieve swelling and pain. *You might have some swelling in your foot for up to two years.* After your dressings have been removed, wear only trainers or soft leather oxford type shoes for the first few months.

Exercises to Strengthen Your Foot

Some exercises or physiotherapy may be recommended to restore your foot's strength, range of motion and gait training after your surgery.

Avoiding Problems after Surgery

Though uncommon, complications can occur following bunion surgery. Contact the hospital if:

- Your dressing loosens, comes off or gets wet.
- Your dressing is moistened with blood or drainage.
- You develop side effects from postoperative medications.

Also, call the hospital immediately if you notice any of the following warning signs:

- Fever, Chills or being unwell
- Persistent warmth or redness around the dressing.
- Increased or persistent pain.
- Significant swelling in the calf above the treated foot.