

What are Bunions?

- Bunions refers to the development of a large bony bump at the big toe joint that points toward the opposite foot, as well as drifting of the big toe toward the second toe. Bunions can become painful, swollen, and red from shoe pressure.

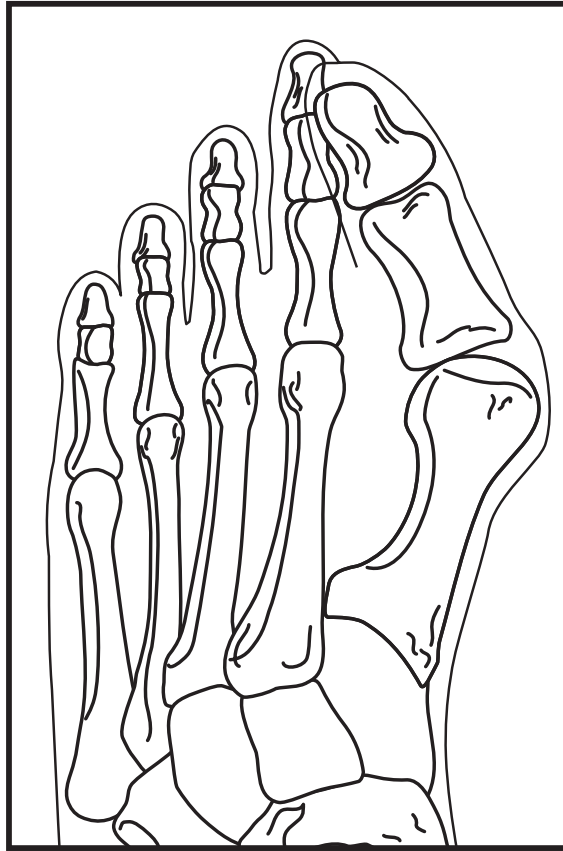
What Causes Bunions?

- Bunions commonly run in families. People are not born with bunions but inherit the foot types that are prone to developing bunions.
- Improperly fitted shoes can contribute to a painful bunion deformity.

Why are Bunions Painful?

Bunions are painful from the pressure applied to them from shoes. Pressure on a bunion can result in the following:

1. Inflammation of bunion; red, swollen and tender.
 2. Pressure on nerves. Burning, numbness and a tingling sensation can also result from nerve irritation.
 3. Callous formation – calluses can become painful when thick.
 4. Pressure on second toe from big toe being pushed against second toe.
- * Arthritis of the big toe joint can also result in pain at the area of bunions.



Treatment

NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT

Goal: To reduce or alleviate pain from bunion deformity.

1. Wear shoes that provide adequate room in the ball of the foot to accommodate the bunion deformity. Avoid high heeled or pointed toe shoes.
2. Stretch shoes on the area of the bunion.
3. Wear bunion pads to alleviate pressure on bump. They can be purchased at drugstores.

4. Take anti-inflammatory medications (e.g., Advil).
 5. Apply ice massage to decrease inflammation.
 6. Wearing arch supports can sometimes help.
- * *Bunion splints generally do not help.*

SURGICAL TREATMENT

Goal: To decrease or alleviate pain by reducing the bunion deformity.

- Surgery to correct a bunion deformity usually requires surgically breaking and resetting the abnormally positioned bone, realigning the big toe, and removal of excessive bone.
- Procedures will vary depending on the degree of deformity. Recovery time will vary depending on physical and occupational requirements, but as a general rule, most bunion surgery requires about 6-8 weeks before returning to shoe wear and some swelling can persist for 6 months or longer.

Indications for Surgery

- Painful bunion deformities NOT relieved by non-surgical treatment, and
- Inability to fit comfortably into reasonable shoes, and
- Functional limitation: inability to perform activities necessary for health and work due to bunion pain, and
- Patients that are not at special risk for surgery (i.e., poor circulation, diabetes, serious disease).

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The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent health problems or if you have questions, please consult your health care provider.

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