

OS07lite Bunion Surgery

This document will give you information about bunion surgery. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a bunion?

A bunion is a bony lump on the side of the foot at the base of the big toe (see figure 1).



Figure 1

Bunion on the left foot

The most common cause of bunions is footwear that does not have enough width to fit the toes in their natural position. They are occasionally associated with arthritis of the joint at the base of the big toe.

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?

The main alternative to surgery is to adapt your shoes so that they fit comfortably.

What does the operation involve?

A variety of anaesthetic techniques are possible. The operation usually takes between half an hour and an hour.

The operation may involve removing the bunion, releasing or tightening ligaments, cutting and realigning the bones of your big toe and straightening one or more of your smaller toes.

Your surgeon may fix the toes in place with wires or tiny screws.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications of any operation

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Blood clots
- Difficulty passing urine

2 Specific complications of this operation

- Damage to nerves
- Problems with bone healing
- Loss of movement in the big toe
- Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of the foot (Complex Regional Pain Syndrome)
- Pain in the ball of the foot
- Recurrent deformity

How soon will I recover?

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

For the first week, you will need to spend most of the time with your leg raised up so that the swelling settles.

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

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

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.

Further information

- NHS smoking helpline on 0800 022 4332 and at www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- www.eatwell.gov.uk – for advice on maintaining a healthy weight
- www.eidoactive.co.uk – for information on how exercise can help you
- www.aboutmyhealth.org – for support and information you can trust
- American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons at www.aaos.org
- www.thefootandankleclinic.com
- British Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society at www.bofas.org.uk
- Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association at www.rsds.org
- Internet Society of Orthopaedic Surgery and Trauma at www.orthogate.org
- NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 (0845 606 46 47 – textphone)

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