

# HALLUX VALGUS - BUNION

## What Is It?

A bunion is a firm, painful bump that forms over a bony bulge at the base of the big toe. In most cases, the big toe joint also is enlarged and has degenerative arthritis. The toe also may be pushed toward the second toe (hallux valgus).



Bunions tend to be inherited, but they also are common in the following groups:

- Women who wear high heels
- People who wear shoes that are too narrow or too pointed
- People with flatfeet

All of these situations force the big toe to drift toward the little toes, and this can cause bunions to form.

## Symptoms

The dominant symptom of a bunion is a big bulging bump on the inside of the base of the big toe. Other symptoms include swelling, soreness and redness around the big toe joint, a tough callus at the bottom of the big toe and persistent or intermittent pain.

## Diagnosis

In most cases, a bunion can be diagnosed just by examining your foot. During this exam, you will be asked to move your big toe up and down to see if you can move it as much as you should be able to. The doctor also will look for signs of redness and swelling and ask if the area is painful. Your doctor may want to order X-rays of the foot to check for other causes of pain, to determine whether there is significant arthritis and to see if the bones are aligned properly.

## Expected Duration

A bunion can develop at any time during childhood or adulthood. It will remain until it is treated.

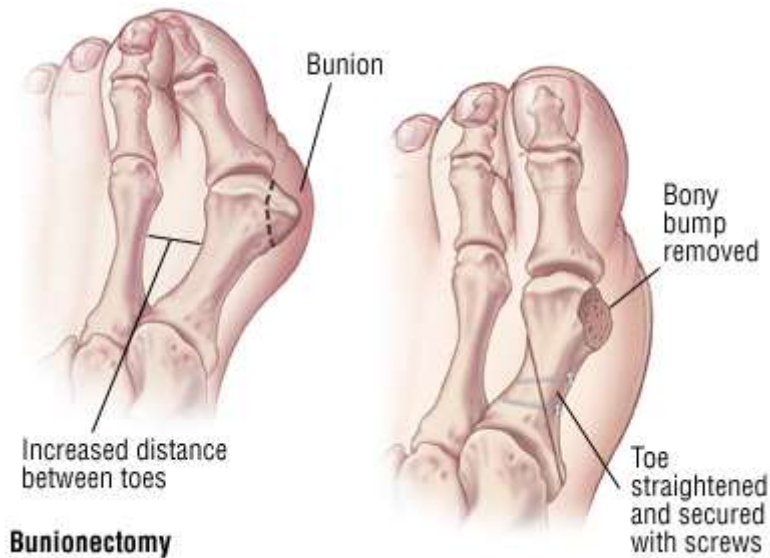
# Prevention / Delayed Progression

To help prevent bunions, select your style and size of shoes wisely. Choose shoes with a wide toe area and a half-inch of space between the tip of your longest toe and the end of the shoe. Shoes also should conform to the shape of your feet without causing too much pressure.

## Treatment

Treatment options are based on the severity of the deformity and symptoms. Nonsurgical treatments usually are enough to relieve the pain and pressure on the big toe. Consider wearing roomy, comfortable shoes and use toe padding . To help relieve pain, you can take over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin and others).

To end persistent pain, treatment recommendations may include a type of foot surgery called a bunionectomy to remove the bunion and perhaps to reshape the first toe joint. There are many different procedure options that will be decided after a clinical and X-ray evaluation. During the operation, the swollen tissue will be removed, the big toe will be straightened if necessary, and the bones of the affected joint may be reshaped or permanently joined. The goal of the surgery is to correct the cause of the bunion and to prevent the bunion from growing back. After surgery, pain medication will be prescribed, and you will be told when you can start moving your toes and ankle.



## Prognosis

For people with mild symptoms and a small bunion, the outlook is excellent. For people who have a bunion removed surgically, the prognosis is also excellent for long-term relief from discomfort and deformity, although after surgery, full recovery can take two months or more.