



### What is it?

A bunion is a bony bump located at the base of the big toe. It can be painful when it rubs against the shoe. Hallux abducto valgus is the medical term used to describe the position of the big toe, and is generally used together with the term bunion which describes the enlarged joint. Bunions are one of the most common big toe problems.

Symptoms of a bunion include redness, swelling or pain at the base of the big toe. Initially a bunion may present as non-painful deviation of your big toe towards the others. As the big toe progresses towards the others, calluses, corns and deformities of the other toes occur. You may also experience limited big toe motion.

### How did I get it?

A bunion forms when the big toe moves out of place. A bunion is the result of improper forces being passed through the joint during walking. Excessive pronation (or flattening of the foot) can contribute. In other words, the bunion is usually the end result of a long period of incorrect foot function.

Your big toe is the big toe for a reason: it is designed to bear most of your weight when you walk. When the big toe is not functioning properly (as in the case of a bunion) you may experience symptoms in your feet, knees, hips and low back.



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Bunions are not inherited, but they can run in families. What can be inherited is your foot type, and some foot types are more prone to bunion formation than others.

### How is it treated?

The initial goal of bunion treatment is to relieve pressure on the bunion and any symptoms that may be present.

#### Footwear Modifications

Correct fitting shoes are essential to addressing the pain from a bunion that may be caused by rubbing against the inside of the shoe. Corns and calluses should be treated as well. Felt padding can be used to buffer the bunion against the shoe.

Padding can also be placed in between the big toe and the second toe which may lessen some of the pain. Keep in mind that these options can help the symptoms, but do not address the cause of your bunions.

#### Exercises and Splints

Exercises can be performed that may help keep

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the joint mobile. A night splint can be worn to try and prevent a loss of mobility. Night splints are more effective when used with young patients who still have considerable mobility in their joints.

### **Surgery**

The type of surgery varies with the type and severity of the bunion. Often your doctor will take an x-ray to measure how much deformity has occurred. Surgery is often indicated in moderate to severe bunions and bunions that do not respond to conservative measures.

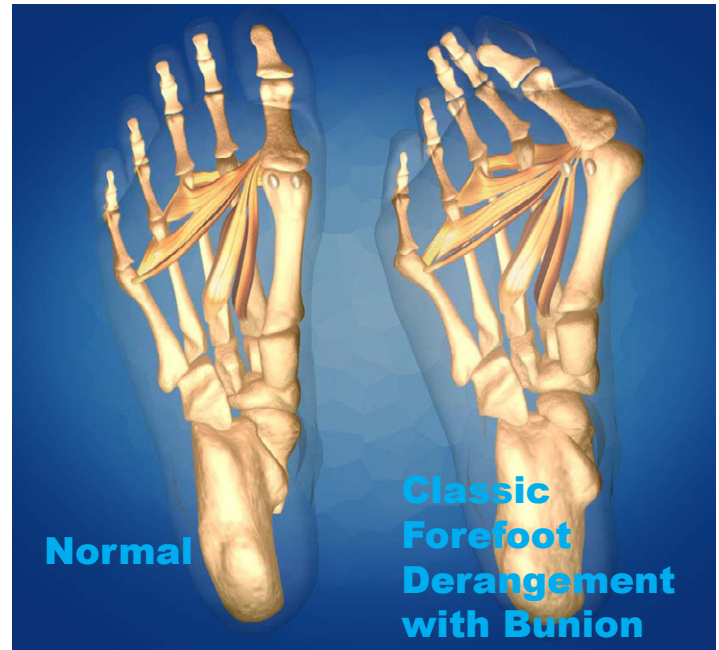
Surgery is often done on an outpatient basis. The most common type of surgery involves realigning the bones of your big toe. Ligaments and tendons may be tightened and the bunion may be shaved away. If your bunion requires surgery, it is crucial that the cause of the problem is also addressed. Failure to do this may result in additional surgery when your bunion returns in a few years.

### **Orthotics**

Custom made orthotics from Sole Supports™ will address your bunion by correcting the cause of your foot dysfunction. Abnormal joint positions can be reversed allowing affected tissues to heal and normal joint function to be restored. In this way the orthotic provides both primary treatment and preventative care.

*Sole Supports™*, unlike typical custom orthotics, are designed to completely support the corrected arch of your foot, determined by a unique way of capturing your optimal foot position. This truly restores proper foot function. When

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this is done, the cause of your bunion is being addressed rather than just the symptoms.

### **What can I expect from treatment?**

It is common to achieve bunion arrest or reversal with the right orthotics – especially in mild to moderate cases. Even in severe cases, Sole Supports™ are indicated to help restore proper function to the foot. The time to symptom resolution varies with the type, severity and cause of your bunion. Your age and the mobility of your joints is also a factor in your recovery. Sole Supports are critical to avoid re-occurrence after surgery as well.

*This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your health care provider.*