

## Bunion surgery

Surgery is performed under general anaesthetic. The stay is usually one night but it can be done as a day case in certain circumstances. The procedure takes between 30-60 minutes. The aim of surgery is to improve pain and function as well as the appearance of the toe.

### The Operation

A 4cm incision is made on the top of the foot between big and second toes to release the tight structures on that side.

An 8cm incision is made on the inner aspect of the foot over the bunion. Some of the underlying bony prominence is shaved off then the bone is divided so that it may be re-aligned. The bone is stabilised with 1 or 2 screws that are completely embedded within the bone. Because the screws are embedded you will not be able to feel them and they should not require removal at a later date.

The tissues are then stitched and a wool and crepe bandage applied.

### Risks

All surgery carries potential risks. The risks are minimised by having the surgery meticulously performed by an expert in foot and ankle surgery. Risks include

**Pain, swelling, and bruising** - will occur to some degree following all foot and ankle surgery

**Infection** - approximately 2% in our unit

**Blood clots (thrombosis)** - treatment to reduce this risk will be provided if required

**Numbness** - usually improves over time

**Stiffness** - this improves over time and helped by physiotherapy

**Scar sensitivity** - can be improved with scar massage

**Incomplete improvement** - occasionally symptoms will be improved but remain present to a small degree.

**Recurrence** - deformities can recur, and there is a higher risk in the younger patients

### Discharge advice following bunion surgery

#### Dressings

Your foot has been dressed with a wool and crepe bandage. This dressing should not be changed until you are seen at your first follow-up appointment 2 weeks following surgery. The dressing must be kept clean and dry.

#### Elevation

It is very important that you rest as much as possible and keep your foot elevated for the first 48 hours after surgery. Try to avoid letting it hang down when sitting as this will lead to swelling and pain. This is most apparent within the first 2 weeks but swelling may occur for up to 6 months after surgery, especially after sitting or standing for long periods. In bed, put the foot on a pillow.

#### Analgesia

You will receive a prescription for pain medication on discharge. Pain is often due to swelling, and this is eased by rest and elevation of the foot.

#### Walking

A special shoe has been supplied for you wear over your dressings that should be worn during the day for 6 weeks. A physiotherapist will show you how to use crutches and apply the shoe. It is necessary for you to walk by taking the weight on your heel so

that you don't put pressure on the big toe. It is not necessary to wear this shoe in bed.

#### Follow-up

You will be reviewed approximately 2 weeks following surgery, and the dressings and sutures will be removed. At this stage you will be placed in a removable splint. You will still need to continue wearing the special shoe for 6 weeks. You will be reviewed again after 6 weeks at which time you will have an X-Ray. If all is well, you will be referred to the physiotherapists and you can discard the post-operative shoe. The foot is often slightly swollen at this stage and so a comfortable pair of loose fitting shoes or trainers will need to be worn and should be brought to the clinic. You will then be reviewed, hopefully for a final check, at about 3 months after the surgery.

#### Driving

You should not drive a manual car for 6 weeks following surgery. After this you should start driving gradually, to check that you are comfortable. It normally takes a few days to feel confident. If you have an automatic car and have only had the left foot operated upon then you may drive after 2 weeks.

#### Work

If you have an office-based job then it may be possible for you to return after 2 weeks however it is more advisable to return after 6 weeks. If you have a more physical job then it may take 8-12 weeks

#### Recovery

It often takes 6 months for all the stiffness and swelling to resolve following bunion surgery, and minor swelling late in the day is not unusual and should not be a cause for concern.

For more information please contact us:

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or visit [www.bfaclinic.co.uk](http://www.bfaclinic.co.uk)