

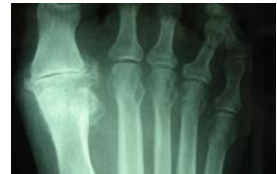
Big toe MTP fusion surgery

Hallux Rigidus describes arthritis (wear and tear) in the joint between the metatarsal (MT) and the phalanx (P) at the base of the big toe. As it becomes more damaged, the joint forms new bony swellings that contribute to the stiffness and pain at the MTP joint. There are 3 main procedures (trimming bone, joint replacement and fusion) depending on how much arthritis is present and other factors.

Do you need this operation at this point?

Before being offered this operation, you should have tried other treatment in the form of wide-box shoe-wear, padding the swelling and stiff forefoot insoles. This operation is offered to you if you continue to have symptoms despite trying the above measures and after you have been examined and counselled by a member of the foot and ankle team. The operation is usually offered in severe cases of arthritis of the big toe MTP joint and has very reliable results.

Smoking and poorly controlled diabetes increases risks significantly and should be addressed before surgery.



What does the operation involve?

The operation is done as a day case, but come prepared in case you need to stay overnight. The operation is performed with general anaesthetic and nerve blocks. It involves one incision on the top of your foot through which extra bone is trimmed and the joint surfaces are removed before the joint is fixed using metal staples, screws or a plate.

Typical post-operative period

You can walk on your heel in the surgical shoe provided but avoid bending big toe. You must keep your foot raised **above your hips** as much as possible week 1.

Dressing will be taken down, sutures trimmed at two weeks

Off work for between 2 and six weeks depending on your job

X-ray at 6 weeks to confirm the bones have healed

No driving until you can do an emergency stop - typically for six to eight weeks

The soft tissue swelling will last for between **two and six months**.

What are the possible complications?

- Infection, numbness or sensitive around scar
- Ongoing pain in other parts of foot
- Mal-position of the big toe or failure of bone healing (non-union)
- Clots in the leg (DVT) that can very rarely lead to fatal clots in the lungs (PE)
- Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome
- **After this operation, walking up steep hills or wearing high heels is usually difficult and some patients require shoe-wear modification.**