

Bunion Surgery

Hallux Valgus is an outward angulation of the big toe with the “bunion” describing the prominence that usually rubs against the shoe. It can lead to lesser-toe deformities and pain in the ball of the foot which if present, requires to be treated as well.

Is surgery the answer for you at this point?

Before being offered this operation, **you will need to have tried simple measures** such as using wider shoes, spacers, perhaps calf stretching or prescribed insoles. If these fail to improve things you should be examined and counselled by a member of the foot and ankle team again. They will help you make the decision of whether risks of surgery outweigh current and future symptoms if surgery is not done at this point. **Smoking and poorly controlled diabetes increases risks significantly and should be addressed before surgery.**

What does the operation involve?



It is typically done under general anaesthetic as a day case, but occasionally you will need to stay overnight.

The operation involves two incisions.

A small incision is made in the first webpace and a soft-tissue release is performed. Through the second longer incision on the side of the toe, the bone is divided using a Z shaped “Scarf osteotomy” and moved into the correct position again. Another wedge of bone is removed from the toe “Akin osteotomy” to fine-tune the position of the toe.

Typical post-operative period

You can weight bear as tolerated straight away in the surgical shoe provided

You must keep your foot raised **above your hips** as much as possible week 1.

Dressing will be taken down, sutures trimmed and big toe mobilised 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 of surgery?

- Infection requiring antibiotics or further surgery
- Sensitive scars or toe numbness
- Joint stiffness
- Over-correction, under-correction or recurrence of the deformity
- Failure of bone healing (non-union)
- Clots in the leg (DVT) that can very rarely lead to fatal clots in the lungs (PE)
- Regional Pain Syndrome – whole foot swells and becomes overly sensitive