Surgical procedure

Bunion Surgery

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
This surgical fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional. If your injury or illness is critical or life threatening, call triple zero (000). To speak to a registered nurse, call healthdirect on 1800 022 222.

Notes and questions to bring to your doctor

For more help with what to ask your doctor, visit healthdirect.gov.au/question-builder
This document will give you information about bunion surgery. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

**What is a bunion?**
A bunion is a bony lump on the side of your foot at the base of your big toe (see figure 1).

**What does the operation involve?**
Various anaesthetic techniques are possible. The operation usually takes 30 minutes to an hour. The operation may involve removing the bunion, releasing or tightening ligaments, realigning your big toe, stiffening a joint and straightening your smaller toes.

**What complications can happen?**

1. **General complications**
   - Pain
   - Bleeding
   - Infection of the surgical site (wound)
   - Unsightly scarring
   - Blood clots
   - Difficulty passing urine

2. **Specific complications**
   - Damage to nerves
   - Problems with bone healing
   - Loss of movement in your big toe
   - Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of your foot (complex regional pain syndrome)
   - Pain in the ball of your foot
   - The deformity coming back

**How soon will I recover?**
You should be able to go home the same day or the day after.
Spend most of the time during the first week with your leg raised so that the swelling settles.
Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.
It can take 6 weeks or longer before the swelling has gone down enough for you to wear a normal soft shoe.

**Summary**
If you have a bunion that is causing pressure and pain, surgery should straighten your big toe and make your foot fit more comfortably into a normal shoe.

**Acknowledgements**
Author: Mr Stephen Milner DM FRCS (Tr. & Orth.)
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