**What Is a Bunion?**

A bunion is an unnatural, bony hump that forms at the base of the big toe where it attaches to the foot. Often, the big toe deviates toward the other toes. When this occurs, the base of the big toe pushes outward on the first metatarsal bone -- which is the bone directly behind the big toe -- forming a bunion. If this happens on the little toe and fifth metatarsal, it's called a bunionette.

Because a bunion occurs at a joint, where the toe bends in normal walking, your entire [body weight](http://www.webmd.com/diet/tc/healthy-weight-what-is-a-healthy-weight) rests on the bunion at each step.[Bunions](http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/understanding-bunions-basics) can be extremely painful. They're also vulnerable to excess pressure and friction from shoes and can lead to the development of[calluses](http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/guide/understanding-corns-calluses-basics).

**What Causes Bunions?**

[Foot problems](http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/foot-pain-causes-and-treatments) typically develop in early adulthood and get worse as the foot spreads with aging. For many people, bunions run in the family. They may be just one of several problems due to weak or poor foot structure. Bunions sometimes develop with [arthritis](http://www.webmd.com/arthritis/default.htm). In people with leg length discrepancies, bunions usually form in the longer leg.

Women are especially prone to developing bunions. Years of wearing tight, poorly fitting shoes -- especially high-heeled, pointed shoes -- can bring on bunions. Such shoes gradually push the foot bones into an unnatural shape.

<http://healthfitnesschronicpaininformation.com/>

## What is the treatment for bunions?

### Good footwear is often all that is needed

Wearing good footwear does not cure the deformity but may ease symptoms of pain and discomfort. Ideally, get footwear advice from a person qualified to diagnose and treat foot disorders (podiatrist - previously called a chiropodist).

Advice may include:

* Wear shoes, trainers or slippers that fit well and are roomy.
* Don't wear high-heeled, pointed or tight shoes.
* You might find that shoes with laces or straps are best, as they can be adjusted to the width of your foot.
* Padding over the bunion may help, as may ice packs.
* Devices which help to straighten the toe (orthoses) are still occasionally recommended, although trials investigating their use have not found them much better than no treatment at all.

### Medication

Painkillers such as [paracetamol](http://patient.info/medicine/paracetamol-calpol-disprol-hedex-panadol) or [ibuprofen](http://patient.info/medicine/ibuprofen-for-pain-and-inflammation-brufen-calprofen-nurofen-orbifen-fenbid) may ease any pain. If the bunion (hallux valgus) develops as part of an arthritis then other medication may be advised. A course of[antibiotics](http://patient.info/health/antibiotics-leaflet) may be needed if the skin and tissues over the deformity become infected.

### Surgery

An operation may be advised if a change of footwear does not ease symptoms. The aim of the operation is to straighten the joint as much as possible and relieve pain. It is not usually done just to improve appearance. It can be done using a local or a general anaesthetic and you are usually out of hospital the same day.

The operation chosen by the specialist depends on the severity of the bunion, the shape of your foot, and other factors, such as if you have arthritis in the joint. There are many different types of operation which are used to treat bunions. These range from operations to trim parts of the joint, to a total artificial replacement of the big toe joint (similar to a knee or a hip replacement). A common surgical procedure used is called a scarf osteotomy (osteotomy means a cut in the bone).

An operation is usually successful at easing symptoms, but not in all cases. It is not always possible to relieve the pain completely or make the toe perfectly straight. Your specialist will be able to advise on the pros and cons of surgery, and the success rate of the chosen operation. Continued pain, infection and the bunion returning are some of the complications of surgery of which you need to be aware.

### **Treatment without surgery**

All bunions are permanent unless surgically corrected. But there are some measures you can take to be more comfortable or to slow a bunion’s progression, says podiatrist [Dina Stock, DPM](http://my.clevelandclinic.org/staff_directory/staff_display?DoctorID=6086), who sees patients at the [Solon Family Health Center](http://my.clevelandclinic.org/locations_directions/regional-locations/solon-fhc) and [Willoughby Hills Family Center](http://my.clevelandclinic.org/locations_directions/Regional-Locations/willoughby-hills-fhc/services).

“For many people, it may simply be a matter of wearing properly fitting shoes,” Dr. Stock says. “Be sure to choose low-heeled, comfortable shoes that provide plenty of space for your toes and the widest part of your foot.”

Dr. Stock says these seven approaches may relieve the pain and pressure on the toe joint:

* Maintain a [normal weight](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2014/12/why-wait-make-new-years-weight-loss-resolution-now/).
* Protect the bunion with a moleskin or gel-filled pad, which you can buy at a drugstore.
* Use shoe inserts to help position the foot correctly. These can be over-the-counter arch supports or prescription orthotic devices.
* Under a doctor’s guidance, wear a splint at night to hold the toe straight and ease discomfort.
* Take [non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2013/04/dont-live-with-your-chronic-joint-pain/) such as ibuprofen.
* Use warm soaks, [ice packs](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2014/08/should-you-use-ice-or-heat-for-pain-infographic/), Whirlpool, ultrasound and massage.
* Buy well-fitting footwear that are wide in the toe area. Shop at a  store where the staff measures your foot and can fit you with an appropriate shoe.

Some patients are interested in treating their bunions by stretching the feet to realign the toes, or using devices such as toe spacers or bunion splints, Dr. Botek says. Often though, the device is like a pair of eyeglasses – when you take it off, the benefit is gone.

<http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/like/111867503524?lpid=107&chn=ps>

<https://bunionsleeve.com.au>