



Emerge Ortho
Blue Ridge Region

Dr. Hedrick's Bunion Infosheet

Bunion

What is it? A bunion is a deformity of the joint at the bottom of the big toe. It can make wearing shoes uncomfortable or, if it is severe, can cause deformities of the small toes. More information can be found [here](#).

How is it diagnosed? X-rays of your foot will be taken to rule out any other problem with your big toe joint and to allow Dr. Hedrick to measure the severity of your deformity.

How is it treated? Almost all bunions are successfully treated by wearing roomy shoes that do not press on the deformity, but some may be treated surgically. Dr. Hedrick will let you know which surgery is most appropriate for you.

Small Bunion

If your bunion is small enough, it can be surgically corrected by trimming bone where it sticks out and sliding the big toe away from the little toes. The first bone of the big toe is cut and then held in its new position with a screw.

Surgery: This is an outpatient surgery that is done under an ankle block and light sedation (general surgical information can be found [here](#)). You will wake up with a bandage and a post-op shoe on your foot. Leave these in place at all times until you return to Dr. Hedrick's office. The bandage must be kept dry. You should rest and keep your foot elevated for the first week. When you are comfortable doing so, you may put all your body weight on the operative foot, which is protected by the post-op shoe.

First post-operative appointment (10-14 days after surgery): Your dressing and sutures will be removed. You may now shower over the incision, but you should not soak the foot in a bathtub or pool. You must still wear the post-op shoe any time you stand and walk, but you may remove it for sleeping or bathing. Keep your foot covered with a clean, dry sock.

Second post-operative appointment (4-5 weeks after surgery): X-rays of your foot will be taken to assess how well the bone is healing. Five to six weeks after surgery, you may transition to a firm, roomy shoe when you are comfortable doing so. You should still restrict your activity to simple walking around while the bone continues to heal.

Third post-operative appointment (7-8 weeks after surgery): X-rays of your foot will be taken to assess how well the bone is healing. You may continue to advance wearing regular shoes and may now gradually advance your activity. It is normal to have swelling and stiffness for many months after the surgery.

Large Bunions

Larger bunions are corrected by cutting both the first bone of the big toe and the first metatarsal (the bone that leads to your big toe), moving them over, and holding them in their new positions with screws.

Surgery: This is an outpatient surgery that is done under an ankle block and light sedation (general surgical information can be found [here](#)). You will wake up with a bandage and a post-op shoe on your foot. Leave these in place at all times until you return to Dr. Hedrick's office. The bandage must be kept dry. You should rest and keep your foot elevated for the first week. When you are comfortable doing so, you may put all your body weight on the operative foot, which is protected by the post-op shoe.

First post-operative appointment (10-14 days after surgery): Your dressing and sutures will be removed. You may now shower over the incision, but you should not soak the foot in a bathtub or pool. You must still wear the post-op shoe any time you stand and walk, but you may remove it for sleeping or bathing. Keep your foot covered with a clean, dry sock.

Second post-operative appointment (5-6 weeks after surgery): X-rays of your foot will be taken to assess how well the bone is healing. Six to seven weeks after surgery, you may transition to a firm, roomy shoe if you are comfortable doing so. You should still restrict your activity to simple walking around while the bone continues to heal.

Third post-operative appointment (8-9 weeks after surgery): X-rays of your foot will be taken to assess how well the bone is healing. You may continue to advance wearing regular shoes. You should still restrict your activity and avoid impact exercises until 12 weeks after the surgery. After 12 weeks, you may gradually return to full activity. It is normal to have swelling and stiffness for many months after the surgery.

First MTP Joint Fusion

Severe bunions are surgically corrected by allowing bone to grow into the joint at the base of the big toe. The toe will no longer bend at this joint, but the bunion should never recur. After a fusion, you will still be able to walk, hike, and do light aerobic activity. You will be unable to wear shoes with heels higher than 1 ½" since your foot will no longer bend at this joint.

Surgery: This is an outpatient surgery that is done under an ankle block and light sedation (general surgical information can be found [here](#)). You will wake up with a bandage and a post-op shoe on your foot. Leave these in place at all times until you return to Dr. Hedrick's office. The bandage must be kept dry. You should rest and keep your foot elevated for the first week. When you are comfortable doing so, you may put all your body weight on the operative foot, which is protected by the post-op shoe.

First post-operative appointment (10-14 days after surgery): Your dressing and sutures will be removed. You may now shower over the incision, but you should not soak the foot in a bathtub or pool. It is essential that you wear the post-op shoe any time you stand and walk in order to protect the big toe joint while the bone is growing together.

You may remove the post-op shoe for sleeping or bathing. You should keep the foot covered with a clean, dry sock.

Second post-operative appointment (6-7 weeks after surgery): X-rays of your foot will be taken to assess how well the bone is fusing. Eight weeks after surgery, you may transition to a firm, roomy shoe if you are comfortable doing so. You should still restrict your activity to simple walking around while the bone continues to heal. You should not go barefoot.

Third post-operative appointment (9-10 weeks after surgery): X-rays of your foot will be taken to assess how well the bone is fusing. You may continue to advance wearing regular shoes. You should still restrict your activity and avoid impact exercises until 12 weeks after the surgery. After 12 weeks, you may gradually return to full activity. It is normal to have swelling for many months after the surgery.