

Bunion



Overview

This deformity affects the joint at the base of the big toe. It is a bony bump beneath the skin on the inner side of the foot. A bunion starts small, but over time it can grow to become very large. Bunions are more common in women.

Causes

A bunion develops because of a pressure imbalance in your foot. This imbalance makes your toe joint unstable. The bones of your big toe begin to shift and angle in toward your second toe. Constant pressure causes the head of your metatarsal (the bone at the base of your toe) to become irritated. It gradually enlarges, forming a bump.

Risk Factors

Wearing high heeled shoes, and wearing shoes that are too tight or too narrow increases your risk for developing bunions. Bunions have also been linked to problems with the structure of your foot, and to arthritis.

Symptoms

The most obvious symptom of a bunion is a visible bump at the base of your big toe. You may experience pain, swelling and redness around the affected joint. The skin may thicken. Your big toe may angle inward. It may overlap or tuck under your other toes. This can result in corns or calluses.

Treatment

Treatment options depend on the severity of your bunion. You may benefit from shoes that give your toes more space. You may benefit from pads or orthotic devices. You may benefit from medications to control pain and swelling, and from applying ice to your bunion. If these methods are not helpful, a surgical procedure may be needed. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.