



* Alternative Public Parking at Mission Professional Centre.

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BUNIONS



THE CALGARY FOOT & ULCER CARE CLINIC

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A bunion is a foot deformity in which the first metatarsal (long bone of your foot) turns inward, and the great toe turns outward. A bump also grows at the base of the great toe. Pressure from shoes often cause the bump to swell and become painful. Pain is the main symptom of a bunion and wearing tight shoes usually makes the discomfort worse.

WHAT CAUSES BUNIONS?

1. Heredity
2. Some people have loose supportive ligaments leading to the spreading of the forefoot and angulation of the first toe towards the second toe.
3. Shoes which are too narrow or too tight. (Bunions are nearly non-existent in the non-shoe-wearing populations of the world.)
4. High heels can cause bunions, sooner than they would normally appear.
5. Arthritis can cause bunions.
6. Pronated feet or tight Achilles tendon can place more stress on the inner aspect of a foot.

PREVENTION:

1. Although some people have a tendency to develop bunions, wearing shoes that allow plenty of room for the toes help minimize this problem.
2. High heeled shoes that force the toes tightly into a narrow toe box aggravate this problem and for this reason are not recommended.

TREATMENT:

The first thing that must be accomplished is removing the pressure over the bunion. This can be done in a number of ways:

1. Sandals with straps not directly over the irritated area will provide relief.
2. Shoes may be stretched in the toe box to accommodate a mild deformity.
3. The purchase of shoes with adequate room in the toe box, i.e. extra depth and extra width shoes with a low heel. Admittedly, this type of shoe is not well accepted by fashion-conscious women. However, you will be pleased to know that shoe manufacturers are responding to your demands and more styles are becoming available.
4. Orthotic devices definitely decrease the symptoms, since a pronated foot aggravates this deformity.
5. Custom-made shoes may be crafted to accommodate any deformity.
6. Surgery is indicated to correct this deformity when pain occurs even in well fitted shoes or when there has been a recent tendency for the toe to angle inward.

Because of the bone's growth potential the adolescent's (10-20 years of age) bunion has many features that make it unique when compared to the adult's bunion. The timing of surgical intervention, even for a deformity which is rapidly progressive is controversial. It is probably best to postpone surgery until a girl is at least 14 and a boy is 16 to avoid interfering with the growth potential of the bone.

Usually the operation is successful, especially if the patient wears footwear which provides ample toe box room. However, in some people, stiffness of the big toe, reoccurrence of the deformity, or excessive angulation of the great toe away from the second toe may occur. Because of these complications, cosmesis and the ability to wear high heeled shoes are poor reasons for surgery.

There is a variety of operations to treat this problem, depending on the severity of the bunion deformity. X-rays will be taken to determine the severity, and your orthopedic surgeon will discuss your specific surgery in detail.