



Know the facts on

# Bunions

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## What are Bunions?

A bunion is a bony, often painful, lump that can develop on the joint at the base of the big toe. This may force the foot bone attached to it (the first metatarsal) to stick out leading to the big toe pointing towards the toes of the same foot and in some cases, it can lead to an overlap between the big toe and the second toe. This change in direction leads to an increase in the size of the joint, and often the formation of an overlying bursa which may appear red and swollen.



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# What causes Bunions?

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There are several possible contributing factors. Wearing ill-fitting shoes is likely to make an existing bunion worse. Another cause can be genetic pre-disposition so if family members have bunions, your risk of developing them is increased.

A number of pre-existing conditions can also contribute - arthritic conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, gout and psoriatic arthritis can increase the likelihood as can conditions associated with loose ligaments, flexible joints and low muscle tone.

# What will happen if I leave it untreated?

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The symptoms can sometimes get worse if left untreated. If left untreated for too long the bunion could develop to the point where it would require surgery.



# What can help?

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Making sure you wear appropriately sized footwear is paramount, if there is enough width to the shoe, it will ease the rate of discomfort by not rubbing against the bunion. Shoes that are fastened with straps are often best for maximising width and comfort and where possible try to avoid wearing high heels as they are often tight fitting and will limit the amount of support.

# What are the treatment options?

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There are several treatments available, though it is preferable to first try out non-surgical treatment, if it is necessary surgery is available. Often, if your bunion is painful, over-the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen may first be recommended but options such as Bunion pads may also ease the pain.

Orthotics can also often provide complete relief by offering more stability around the joint. They can't reverse any damage done to the bone structure, but for many people they can achieve pain free walking when used in appropriate footwear.