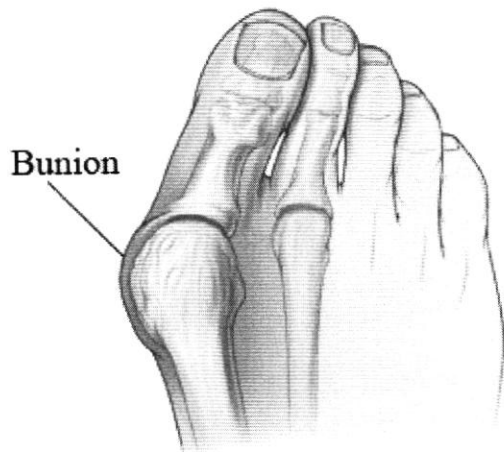


Bunions: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

A bunion is a bump on the outside of the joint at the bottom of your big toe. It can cause pain and swelling in the toe. A bunion forms when bone or tissue around the joint becomes swollen from too much pressure. You also can have a bunionette, or tailor's bunion, which forms on the joint of the little toe. Sometimes, a bunion on the big toe turns the toe in toward the second toe. This is called displacement. It can lead to problems with the other toes.

You can get a bunion from having an unusual walking style, having flatfeet, or wearing tight-fitting shoes. You can treat most bunions at home with a few simple steps. If you have a lot of pain, your doctor may inject medicine into the bunion to reduce swelling for a while. If you still have pain, you may need to have surgery.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
- Wear shoes that have a wide and deep space for the toes. Also, wear shoes that have low or flat heels and good arch supports. Do not wear tight, narrow, or high-heeled shoes.
- Try bunion pads, arch supports, toe spacers, or shoe inserts. They can help shift your weight when you walk to take pressure off your big toe.
- Put moleskin or another type of cushion on or around the bunion to keep it from rubbing against your shoe.
- Put ice or a cold pack on the area for 10 to 20 minutes at a time as needed. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Prop up your foot on a pillow when you ice your toe or anytime you sit or lie down. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have severe pain.
- Your toe is cool or pale or changes color.
- You have tingling, weakness, or numbness in the toe.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Pain and swelling get worse.
- You do not get better as expected.

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