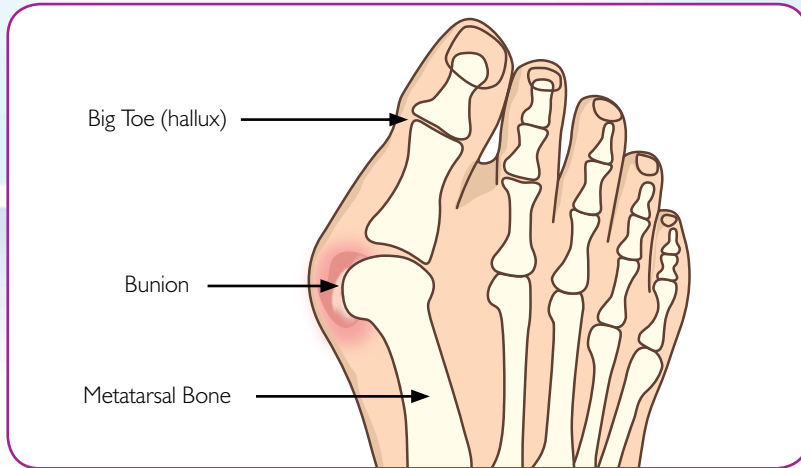


HALLUX VALGUS



WHAT IS IT?

Hallux valgus, also known as a bunion, is a deformity of the joint between the 1st metatarsal bone and the big toe (hallux). The toe deviates to point towards the fifth toe leaving the head of the 1st metatarsal bone very

prominent on the inside of the foot. In an attempt to protect the head of the metatarsal, the body creates a fluid filled sac there, which can become very painful as it rubs against footwear.

DIAGNOSIS

You might be experiencing pain in the affected joint with associated redness and swelling over the bump caused by the head of the 1st metatarsal bone. This is usually progressive and might have been present for a

number of years. A visual identification is sufficient to diagnose hallux valgus. An x-ray is the only way to see the true extent of the deformity however this is largely unnecessary unless you are having surgical correction.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

The cause of your bunion is often due to more than one factor. Unfortunately genetics play a significant role in their development, so there is little way of preventing them. It is also impossible to reverse the damage once it has occurred without surgical intervention.

There are, however, ways in which you can reduce the severity of the deformity or slow down its progression. Footwear has a huge impact on the development of bunions. Narrow fitting and pointed shoes (especially in the toe box) and footwear which is unsupportive under the arch of the foot can contribute. Trainer type shoes with a wide accommodative toe box, a fastening and a low heel are the most appropriate. Your podiatrist will also assess the way you walk to see if you excessively

over-pronate as this may also further contribute to the progression of bunions. Therefore, an orthotic insole may be prescribed to decrease this over-pronation. Often the 2nd toe may sit under or over the big toe as it moves across. Additionally, there is often pain associated with the bump at the head of your 1st metatarsal so pain control is also important.

Your podiatrist will be able to provide you with a protective cover or a gel or silicon device to alleviate any pain or discomfort associated with these problems. By wearing well fitting shoes and controlling pronation with an insole, your pain levels should decrease. If this is not the case then pain killers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen could be taken. If the level of pain you experience becomes too difficult to manage, then surgical intervention may be necessary.