

## BUNIONS (a.k.a Hallux Valgus)

### What is it?

- A bunion = Hallux (Big toe) Valgus (to the outside).
- The great toe is deviated to the outside, creating a prominence on the inside of the forefoot (Figure. #1).
- Bunion deformities can vary greatly in their extent and in the symptoms that they cause.

### What causes bunions?

- Bunions occur gradually over time due to the way each foot absorbs force during walking.
- Most patients with bunions have a positive family history

### Clinical Presentation:

Bunion Symptoms can vary in severity from none at all to severe discomfort aggravated by restrictive shoe wear and by standing and walking.

- Pain over the prominent bump on the inside of the forefoot. (Figure #2):
- And/or: Pain under the area near the base of the second toe. (Figure #2): Symptoms can vary in severity from none at all to severe discomfort aggravated by standing and walking.
- NO direct correlation between the size of the bunion and the patient's symptoms.
- Symptoms are often exacerbated by restrictive shoe wear, particularly shoes with a narrow toe box or an uncomfortable, stiff, restraining upper.
- Patients with bunions often have a positive family history.

### NON-OPERATIVE TREATMENT

The initial treatment of a bunion should be non-operative. Although bunions cannot be eliminated without surgery excellent resolution of symptoms is often possible with simple non-operative interventions. Non-operative treatment may include:

**Comfort shoes.** Shoes with a wide non-constrictive toebox, especially one that is made out of a soft material such as leather, can be quite helpful in reducing the irritation over the prominent bunion. In some instances, it is helpful to have a shoemaker stretch the inside aspect of the shoe

**Bunion pads** that cover the painful prominence may also be helpful in decreasing the symptoms associated with the bunion. These pads can be obtained at many drugstores.

**A toe spacer** placed between the great toe and the second toe can help to reduce the bunion deformity and, thereby, decrease the bunion symptoms.

**Over-the-counter accommodative orthotics** may also help bunion symptoms. Orthotics with a slight arch built in may be particularly helpful if bunion symptoms are associated with the sole of the forefoot.

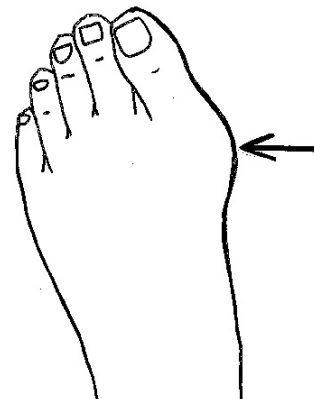


Figure #1

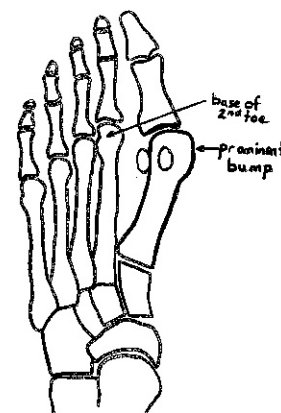


Figure #2