

## Hallux Valgus Advice sheet

### **What is Hallux Valgus?**

Hallux Valgus is commonly known as a bunion. A bunion is a deformity of the base joint of the big toe. The cause is not clear in many cases. The deformity may cause the foot to rub on shoes which may cause inflammation and pain. Suitable footwear is often all that is needed to ease symptoms. An operation to correct the deformity is an option if suitable footwear does not ease symptoms.

A bunion is when your big toe is angled towards the second toe. This causes a bump on the side at the base of the big toe. In addition there is often thickening of the skin and tissues next to the affected joint. The thickened skin and tissues may become inflamed, swollen and painful.

Sometimes a fluid-filled sac (bursa) develops over the joint.



### **What symptoms and problems are caused by bunions?**

- Pain. You may then have difficulty walking due to pain.
- Inflammation and swelling at the base of the toe. This can sometimes become infected.
- The foot may become so wide that it can be difficult to find wide enough shoes.
- You may get arthritis in the big toe.
- The second toe can become deformed.
- In severe cases, the big toe can push your second toe out of place.

### **What is the treatment for bunions?**

Suitable footwear is often all that is needed. Wearing suitable footwear does not cure the deformity but may ease symptoms of pain and discomfort. Your podiatrist can give you advice about suitable footwear. Advice may include:

- Wear shoes, trainers or slippers that fit well.
- Don't wear high-heeled, pointed or tight shoes.
- You might find that shoes with laces or straps are best, as they can be adjusted to the width of your foot.
- Temporary padding around the bunion may help if the bunion is inflamed, as may ice packs.
- Devices which claim to help to straighten the toe are still occasionally recommended, however, trials investigating their use have not found them any better than no treatment.
- Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen may ease any pain.
- If the bunion develops as part of an arthritis then other medication may be advised
- Surgery may be an option if a change of footwear does not ease symptoms
- If a bursitis is present it may be possible to drain some fluid from around the joint and/or inject with an anti-inflammatory.

Personal advice

### **Useful Information for patients**

[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

nhs24 MSK Help App

[www.paintoolkit.org](http://www.paintoolkit.org)