

Bunions are an abnormal enlargement at the joint between the foot and the beginning of the big toe, which is the result of pressure.

### What to look for

- an angular protrusion at the side of the foot behind the big toe, sometimes accompanied by hardened skin or a callus.
- swelling, redness, unusual tenderness, or pain at the base of the big toe and in the ball of the foot, especially if the area becomes shiny and cool to the touch.

A bunion is an unnatural bump or bend in the bone that forms the ball of the foot at the base of the big toe. The result is an unsightly swelling at the inside of the foot, sometimes pushing the big toe inward so it overlaps one or more other toes.

Because a bunion occurs at the joint where the toe bends in normal walking, your entire body weight rests on it at each step. While most bunions don't affect normal walking, they can be extremely painful.

### Causes

Bunions are caused by wearing shoes which are too tight for your toes. Foot problems typically develop in early adulthood, becoming more pronounced as the foot spreads with aging. Bunions can be hereditary and occur along with other problems associated with weak or poor foot structure, as well as with corns and calluses. Bunions sometimes develop with arthritis.

Most of the time, bunions are so obvious from the pain and the unusual shape of the toe that further diagnosis is unnecessary.

### Traditional Treatment

Relieving a bunion's discomfort generally consists of steps to reduce pain and inflammation, followed by measures to prevent recurrence.

Your doctor may recommend an over-the-counter pain remedy, or may prescribe a specific medication to relieve the swelling and inflammation. A warm footbath or spa may also help relieve the immediate pain and discomfort, as may an analgesic cream containing a chili-pepper extract.

If your bunion isn't persistently painful and you catch it early, wearing well-made, well-fitting shoes may be all the therapy you need.

In some cases, a specialist can prescribe shoes with specially designed insoles and uppers that take the pressure off affected joints and help the foot regain its proper shape.

### Alternative/Natural Treatments

Various therapies for reducing pain and inflammation can be used effectively on bunions.

**Homoeopathy** - Following an examination of your feet, you can be prescribed remedies that may relieve the pain of a bunion. .

**Herbal Treatments** - Try drinking nettle tea everyday for some relief. Also a warm poultice using rosemary, mustard or calendula oil followed by an ice pack can be soothing.

### Personal Care

- When a bunion causes sore feet, a hot compress or soaking in warm water will ease the pain.

### Prevention

Always wear well fitted shoes in childhood to avoid problems later on. Exercising your feet can strengthen them, particularly if you learn to pick up small objects with your toes.

### When to seek further professional advice

- When you discover any of the symptoms mentioned above