

Bunions (Hallux Abducto Valgus)

“Bunion” is the common term for a medical condition known as Hallux Abducto Valgus. A bunion is an abnormal bony prominence on the inside of the foot at the first toe joint. The visible bump actually reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot. It may be painful, swollen and/or red. A bunion usually develops in stages. Firstly the big toe drifts towards the second toe. Added bone then develops and the big toe joint increases in size. The big toe may eventually curl over or under the second toe joint.



CAUSES

- Poor foot biomechanics – although you cannot inherit bunions you can inherit the foot type which predisposes you to bunion development.
- Incorrect footwear – slip on shoes with pointy toes will put pressure on the big toe and hasten bunion development. Also high heels put extra pressure on the forefoot and may worsen your bunions.
- Injury
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Gout

Bunions do not generally get better if left untreated. Early treatments are aimed at easing the pain of bunions and slowing their progress, but they won't reverse the deformity itself.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

- **Footwear Modification** - Wearing the right kind of shoes is very important. Recommendations are that the forefoot easily fits within the width of the shoe and there is adequate cushioning and arch support
- **Padding** - The use of pads and cushions to reduce the pressure over the bone can also be helpful for mild bunion deformities. Your Podiatrist can make various pads to relieve pain and pressure
- **Strapping** – Your podiatrist may apply Rocktape to assist with pain reduction and provide temporary improvement to the joint alignment
- **At home therapy** - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may help to relieve pain. Applying an ice pack several times a day helps reduce inflammation and pain.
- **Orthotic Devices** - Podiatrists can prescribe customised orthotic devices that help reduce the stress on a bunion and control the biomechanical factors which cause them
- **Strengthening and Stretching Exercises** - To maintain joint mobility and prevent stiffness or arthritis
- **Foot Mobilisation Technique** - Can help slow progression by improving joint mobility, promoting the body's proprioceptive (balancing) system to work better, increasing the muscle to nerve messages and decreasing pain messages that are sent to the brain via joint stimulation
- **Trigger point dry needling** - Can also assist with pain relief by releasing muscle tension
- **When is Surgery Needed?** - When the pain of a bunion interferes with daily activities and other treatments are no longer helping, it's time to discuss surgical options with your Podiatrist. Together you can decide if surgery is best for you