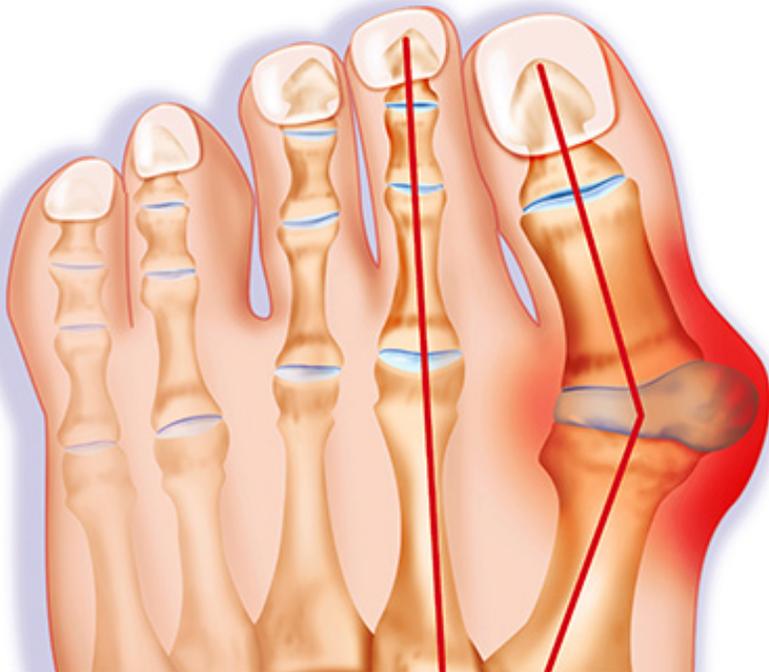


Bunion - Hallux Valgus



A bony enlargement around a joint is commonly referred to as a "bunion". Often described by patients as a "bump" around the joint, bunions may be accompanied by inflammation of the bursa (a sac or sac like cavity that cushions a joint) resulting in pain (bursitis) and limitation of motion.

The medical terms "hallux valgus" or "hallux abducto valgus" are used to describe a bunion deformity associated with the first toe joint known as the first metatarsal phalangeal joint or 1st MPJ.

The term "hallux" refers to the great toe and the term "valgus" refers to the abnormal rotation of the great toe. The term "abducto" refers to the abnormal drifting or inward movement of the great toe towards the 2nd toe. A bunion may also develop on the fifth (little) toe where it is referred to as a "tailor's bunion" or "bunionette". In addition to causing pain, a bunion changes the shape of your foot, making it difficult to find shoes that fit.

Bunions occur when an underlying structural abnormality effects foot mechanics. Certain tendons, ligaments and supportive structures of the foot are no longer functioning. Faulty biomechanics, abnormal bone structure and excessive ligamentous flexibility result in the development of a bunion. Other causes of bunion formation include a hereditary (genetic) predisposition to bunion development. That is to say, the bunion is not inherited but rather a certain foot

type that makes a person prone to developing a bunion. Other causes of bunion formation include rheumatoid arthritis, specific trauma to the joint and various neurological conditions affecting the muscles and tendons that control the joint.

Poor fitting shoes do not cause a bunion to form but often exacerbate or make the problem worse. Shoes with a tight toe box will aggravate the symptoms associated with a bunion deformity often resulting in further pain, inflammation, a burning sensation and sometimes numbness. Pain at rest and at night may be due to a condition known as "hallux rigidus" (arthritis of the great toe) that occurs when the "bump" sits on the top not on the side of the toe. There are other deformities of the great toe, some that may co-exist in the same location.

With early bunion treatment, non-invasive treatments can be helpful. While these treatments don't completely get rid of a bunion, they may be effective in controlling your symptoms. When non-invasive methods fail to address your pain or prevent the progression of the condition, your doctor may advise a surgical solution.

Conservative treatment may include shoe accommodations and changes in footwear, medications such as NSAID'S or cortisone injections or prescription orthotics (shoe inserts) used to control abnormal foot movement.

Surgical procedures are highly individualized and may include removal of the enlarged bone and realignment of the muscles, tendons and ligaments surrounding the joint. If the joint is damaged beyond repair an artificial implant may be used to replace the damaged joint.