

Patient information - Bunion and Claw/Hammer Toes

You are scheduled to have Bunion Surgery and correction of claw/hammer toes. Here you will find an outline of what to expect before and after surgery.

PLEASE TAKE FEW MOMENTS TO REVIEW THIS AHEAD OF TIME AS IT PROVIDES IMPORTANT INFORMATION PERTINENT TO YOUR SURGERY.

Weeks before surgery

Please contact my office if you have questions about your upcoming surgery. If you need to cancel or postpone surgery, please notify my office as soon as possible. If you are unsure about cancelation policy or have any other questions, feel free to contact my office.

If you require crutches, they could be purchased at the hospital on the day of your surgery. Alternatively, you could look into buying “knee scooter”. They are sold online as well as various orthopaedic appliance stores.

One Day before surgery

Please make sure not to eat or drink anything the midnight before surgery. Since you will be going home following your surgery, you will need to make arrangements to be picked up from the hospital by your friends or family.

Hospital staff will contact you one day before surgery to provide you with specific time of surgery. This information is typically not available until the day before surgery.

Day of surgery

Upon arrival to the hospital, please check in with Admitting. Once checked in, please make your way to G6, and check in with the nursing staff. Be prepared to spend at least 6-8 hours at the hospital following your arrival. You will need to make arrangements to be picked up from the hospital by a friend or a family member.

Following surgery, you will have a soft partial below-knee cast. Upon discharge, you will be provided with follow-up appointment and a prescription for analgesia. I will typically see you in 2-3 weeks following the surgery to take out sutures and change dressings/cast. Follow-up appointment will be at the Fracture clinic at the hospital.

First 2-3 weeks following surgery

It is normal to feel tired and have pain after surgery. Please take time to rest. Return to work and physical activities will depend on various factors.

Showering could be a challenge. Most people use wipes/sponge baths. If you decide to take a shower, please keep the cast/dressings clean and dry. Please do not manipulate dressings/casts unless specifically instructed to do so. If the dressing or cast gets wet, you will need to make arrangements to see me sooner at the Fracture Clinic to have that addressed.

While incision is still healing, please do not put polysporin or any other lotions / creams.

After surgery, you will likely be asked to "heel weight-bear" for 6 weeks. Meaning, you can only put pressure on the heel of your foot while walking. Please avoid putting pressure on the rest of the foot to help with the healing process. You may want to get a cane or a walker/crutches to assist with ambulation.

Keep your foot elevated while sitting or lying down. That will help with swelling and pain. Generally, swelling is very common following foot or ankle surgery. It could take several months or longer for the swelling to go away.

You will be provided with a prescription for analgesia following your surgery. Use it as a breakthrough for pain only if needed. Try using other modes of analgesia as well (i.e., Tylenol). Intermittent use of ice packs (15 min on/off, not in direct contact with the skin) would also be helpful.

Few more things to keep in mind:

- Following surgery, you may feel a bit of numbness, tingling, or sensitivity of the skin around the foot or ankle. Typically, this is common, and related to swelling and surgery. This will improve with movement and use after the cast comes off.
- We use a pink-coloured cleaning solution during the surgery to clean your foot. Some of it may still be visible on your skin. That's normal. However, it is not normal for redness to spread up the leg, and needs to be assessed.

Please note that it takes time for tissues to heal. It is helpful to:

- Supplement your diet with Calcium and Vitamin D
- Avoid smoking
- Patients with Diabetes should pay particular attention to sugar control

Follow-up visit #1

You will have a follow-up appointment at the hospital in the Fracture Clinic 2-3 weeks after your surgery. Initial cast and dressings will be removed. It will be replaced with a “bunion dressing”. Please keep the dressing intact and do not remove it. It will be removed for you 6 weeks following surgery.

You will need to continue using stiff-sole post-op shoe or an Air Cast (they can be purchased at the hospital on the day of your visit). Please, continue “heel-weightbearing” until instructed to stop (typically for a total of 6 weeks post-operatively).

Claw toes will likely have temporary pins in them (until 6 weeks after surgery). Do not manipulate them until instructed to do so. However, it is helpful to manipulate and bend other toes (toes that were not operated on).

Follow-up visit #2

You will have a second follow-up visit around 6 weeks following your surgery. New xrays will be obtained at that point. You will be allowed to start walking normally. However, you will be asked to keep on using a stiff-sole shoe for additional 6 weeks.

Please bring a toe spacer to this appointment (it can be purchased at the pharmacy). Once the bunion dressing is removed, you will need to use a toe-spacer until 3 months following your surgery.

Claw toes will have pins removed at this point. Please start manipulating the toes at this point.

You should start bending / manipulating your toe at least 3 times a day for 10 min each time. Once the bunion dressing is removed and the incision is fully healed, it would be helpful to massage the scar 2-3 times per day. It will help to reduce pain and swelling.

Old skin will take several weeks to fully slough off.

Subsequent Follow-up visits

We will have at least one more follow-up visit 3 months following surgery. It is expected that pain will continue to gradually reduce. Swelling may take over 1 year to subside.

If you have any other questions, please contact my office at 416-479-1623 or fracture clinic at 416-469-6384.