

## What is a bunion?

A bunion (hallux valgus) is a bony bump that forms on the joint at the base of your big toe. It is caused by a change in the position of the first metatarsal, usually related to foot joint instability. Over time extra bone is produced from pressure on the area, forming a bump on the side of your big toe joint. Arthritis will occur in this condition over time. This condition usually worsens with time.

Bunions can be extremely painful. Since a bunion occurs at a joint where your toe bends while walking, it is repeatedly strained with every step. Since bunions protrude from your foot, they also have the tendency to rub against footwear and cause calluses and blisters.

Bunions are most common in women and are often inherited. Wearing tight fitting shoes with narrow tips, or high heels can cause this problem. There are also inherited genetic factors that are believed to cause bunions, especially when they occur in younger people.

## How are bunions treated?

Conservative treatment of a bunion may consist of simple changes in the types of shoes which one wears. Pain in the ball of the foot from a bunion may also be minimized with the use of padding and orthotics in shoes. There are also bunion shields which are pads designed to alleviate the pain associated with pressure on the painful bump. Oral anti-inflammatory medications, cortisone injections, and topical anti-inflammatory creams may also be used to decrease the pain of a bunion.

Some companies market straps which realign the toe and claim to permanently fix the deformity. These are bogus claims and are unsupported by research and professional opinions. The only way to permanently remove a bunion is with surgical correction. Since there

are many ways to correct this deformity, it is critically important to have a surgeon who is able to perform any of them proficiently to ensure an excellent outcome.

Dr. Walimire will assess your individual situation to determine which procedure is best for you. Depending on the type of surgery which has been recommended, the total recovery time following surgery may be as short as 4 weeks or as long as 3-4 months. Dr. Walimire always recommends a minimum of one week off work to avoid excessive swelling of the foot. Many unionectomies allow immediate weight-bearing activity after surgery while others require a short period of non-weightbearing activity.

Dr. Walimire has performed thousands of these procedures throughout his career and has the expertise to correct even the most difficult or reoccurring bunion deformities. Call for you appointment to discuss your bunion in detail with Dr. Walimire to see what option is right for you.

