

# Bunions

## What are they?

Bunions are lumps of bone and tissue that form around a joint – usually in either the big or little toes. They are genetic and can affect both the young and old though the severity usually worsens with age. As the bunion grows, it impacts on the other toes of the foot, forcing the bones into uncomfortable and unnatural positions. This can have a huge impact on comfort and therefore the ability to walk.

## What are the symptoms?

- First you may notice a lump on the side of your foot, or your big toe starting to lean toward the second toe.
- Bunions are not usually painful when they begin to develop; pain usually begins as they progress, making your shoes tighter and your foot squashed inside the shoe.
- If you wear heeled shoes, narrow, pointed shoes or shoes with little support, you will find your bunions will become more painful.
- Callus and corns can form over joints, either on the toes or under the foot. These can be very painful and require regular treatment to remove.
- There are also secondary injuries that are caused by tightening of the shoes. Intermetatarsal bursitis, Morton's neuroma, plantar plate tears and joint inflammation all cause pain around the ball of the foot - most commonly underneath but can also cause swelling and pain on the top of the foot.

## How can I fix them?

Treatment is available to reduce and remove bunions.

- If caught early, fitting an orthotic device into the shoes to provide support for the foot and ease pressure over the problem joint can slow bunion growth.
- Footwear advice will also be given – a shoe with a wider and deeper toe box will ease pressure across the forefoot as well as provide enough room for orthoses to fit into. Wide, supportive footwear will also help slow the progression of the bunion.
- In a lot of elderly people or those with severe deformity, the bunions have progressed beyond help of footwear and orthoses, in which case surgery may also be an option.

common bunion



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If you have any questions regarding any of the above information please feel free to contact Rachael at Pod Co Podiatry

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