

The British Chiropody and Podiatry Association

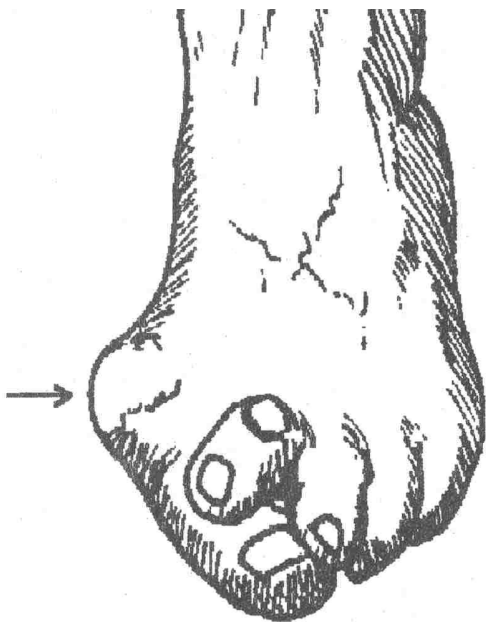
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BUNIONS

CAUSES

A bunion can develop when the great toe is pushed from its normal alignment and forced by pressure into an abnormal position.



Then the joint which is subjected to further pressure develops a bursa, (a sack which is a hollow lined with fluid) which can become inflamed. This is common in certain occupations (such as police, waiters, hairdressers etc) where the person is on their feet for many hours so allowing the anterior metatarsal arch to fall or weaken and the foot becomes flattened and the joint of the big toe becomes projected. It is then subjected to shoe pressure because of the increase in size. Obesity can be a cause as can pregnancy or injury. Many people have an enlarged joint, this is not the same as a bunion.

TREATMENT

This depends largely on how long the bunion has been in existence. Seldom can a radical cure for a fully developed bunion be attained. A regular course of treatment must be started to deal not only with the inflammation and the removal of coarsened skin but to assist with proper manipulation of the great toe. This will generally relieve the pain, in many cases palliative treatment must be continued for a long period before a cure can be affected and even then the enlarged joint does not entirely disappear. Massage has a

Part to play in helping the joint to become more mobile.

A biomechanical examination of the foot can often discover the reason that the great toe is out of alignment. Your chiropodist is able to ascertain if orthotics (prescription supports) may help to redress the balance.

SURGICAL TREATMENT

There have been great advances in modern surgery and there are now many operations that can be undertaken, some with considerable success whilst others leave a lot to be desired. However, you cannot be given a new foot, the best treatment is prevention.

PREVENTION

Good general care of the feet and keen observation can normally assist in preventing bunions developing. Footwear is often the cause although there can be a family tendency towards an enlarged joint.

FOOTWEAR

Shoes must be carefully chosen to ensure that the feet are not squashed so allowing the big toe to be pushed out of normal alignment. If a bunion is present then ensure there is enough room in the shoe so that it is not subjected to further pressure. Always have your feet measured and wear well-fitting shoes. In addition socks/stockings/tights must also fit well and not impede the foot in any way.



Always consult a qualified chiropodist. Look for the letters MSSCh (or FSSCh), MBChA. Issued by: The British Chiropody and Podiatry Association, Maidenhead, United Kingdom