



Here at Simply Feet - we like to look at everything in a simple way!

The Traffic Light symbol above indicates the way you should approach this condition. **Amber means that you can begin treating this condition yourself. However, you should seek professional help if you want reassurance that what you are doing is correct or if the condition fails to improve within a short time.**

So, let's approach your problem in a methodical and logical manner, so that you can gain some knowledge about your condition. After reading a little about it, you can decide on the best course of action.

Remember this advice is for **guidance only** and if you are in any doubt at all, please consult your HPC Registered Podiatrist, Physiotherapist or your GP.

Bunions

What is it?

Bunions occur at the base of the big toe. The position of the toe changes, to press into, or even overlap, the second toe. The bone behind the big toe (the metatarsal) becomes prominent and the foot becomes wider. The technical term for a bunion is *hallux abducto valgus*.

Some Common Causes

- Although bunions are very common, we still don't really know what causes them. Various factors are thought to be involved:
- The way your foot functions seems to be important: a flat foot, or low arches may make the joint unstable and susceptible to changing position.
- If the joint is unstable because of your pattern of foot function, then tight, pointy shoes or high heels may speed up the process. It is a common mistake to believe that bunions are caused by tight, pointy shoes, although they certainly don't help.
- Bunions can run in families – so genes seem to be important.

The Main Symptoms are:

- Bunions can be painful, for various reasons.
- Firstly, if your foot is wider it can become compressed by your shoes. Wear wider shoes to reduce the pressure on the side of the joint.
- Pain in the joint, because of arthritis. However, it is important to note that arthritis need not be present.
- Difficulty walking because of this pain.
- A swollen joint which can have some hard skin or a corn over it.
- The formation of localised swelling on the bony lump, which is called a bursa.

Some suggested treatment programs:

- Wear shoes that are roomy and have enough space in the front to accommodate the true width of your foot.
- Avoid wearing high heeled and pointy shoes.
- You can pad the area with felt or gel padding to help protect it from pressure. However, if your shoes are tight further padding won't help – it will make it worse by increasing the pressure.
- A corrective device such as an Orthotic may help. This is an insert that you put into your shoe, which helps the foot realign itself, and could take the pressure off your big toe by not letting your foot roll inwards onto your big toe joint. This approach is trying to improve foot function.
- In some cases surgery may be required. Whilst there are few people who like the thought of surgery – especially bunion surgery, which seems to have a bad reputation – it can be successful if performed for the right reasons and by an experienced surgeon. It is not a very good idea at all to have bunion surgery just to make your foot look better. For further information arrange to see your nearest HPC registered Podiatrist.