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Bunions

What is a Bunion?

Bunions (hallux valgus) are often described as a bump on the side of the big toe. But a bunion is more than that. The visible bump actually reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot.. Bunions are a progressive disorder. They begin with a leaning of the big toe, gradually changing the angle of the bones in the foot over the years.

Symptoms

- Deformity of the big toe joint
- Growth of a bony lump (exostosis) at the side of the big toe joint
- Pain, redness and tissue swelling (bursitis) over the big toe joint, with thickening of overlying skin
- Pain when walking (particularly during the "push off" phase)
- Overlapping of the big toe above or below the second toe in severe cases.

Cause

- Wearing improperly fitting shoes
- Certain arthritic conditions and ligament disorders
- Age (the incidence of bunions increases with age)
- Being flat-footed with feet that roll inwards (over pronation)
- Past injury (trauma) to the foot

Treatment

Early treatments are aimed at limiting the progression of the deformity and easing the pain of bunion or an associated joint. Conservative treatments such as orthotics can achieve this but they won't reverse the deformity itself. These options include:

- **Changes in footwear**
- **Padding.** Pads placed over the area of the bunion can help minimise pain
- **Icing.** Applying an ice pack several times a day helps reduce inflammation and pain.
- **Orthotic devices.** Orthotics are the mainstay of non-surgical treatment for bunions.

Orthotics for Bunions

Orthotics are custom made and designed to optimise foot function. An orthotic can help prevent a bunion getting worse and reduce pain enabling you enjoy life without foot pain, and dysfunction. Orthotics can not re-straighten bunions, only surgery can to this.

Practitioner's Notes:

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