

Minimally Invasive Bunion Correction



Most bunions can be treated without surgery. But when nonsurgical treatments are not enough, Minimally Invasive Bunion Correction Surgery can relieve your pain, correct any related foot deformity, and help you resume your normal activities. Minimally Invasive Bunion Surgery uses tiny, cosmetic incisions to perform powerful correction of the bunion deformity. According to medical research, when comparing Minimally Invasive Bunion Surgery to traditional bunion surgery with big, open incisions, the Minimally Invasive Surgical option results in less pain, improved cosmetic results and increased patient satisfaction.

What is a Bunion?

A bunion is a painful bump (see picture above) that develops on the inner part of your big toe. This bump is made up of bone and soft tissue. When you have a bunion, you may notice your big toe is curving over towards the smaller toes.

What Causes Bunions?

Genetics play a big role in the development of bunions. Many patients with bunions report that their family members also have bunions.

Another common cause of bunions is the prolonged wearing of tightly fitting shoes, usually shoes with a narrow, pointed toe box that squeezes the toes into an unnatural position. Bunions also may be caused by arthritis or injury.

A study by the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society found that 88 percent of women in the U.S. wear shoes that are too small and 55 percent have bunions. Not surprisingly, bunions are nine times more common in women than men.

Can Bunions Be Prevented?

Bunions often become painful if they are allowed to progress. But not all bunions progress. Many bunion problems can be managed without surgery. In general, bunions that are not painful do not need surgical correction. For this reason, orthopaedic surgeons do not recommend "preventive" surgery for bunions that do not hurt; with proper preventive care, they may never become a problem.

Bunion pain can be successfully managed in many cases by switching to shoes that fit properly and don't compress the toes. Dr. Buchanan can give you more information about proper shoe fit and the types of shoes that would be best for you.

Is Minimally Invasive Bunion Surgery For You?

If nonsurgical treatment fails, you may want to consider surgery. Many studies have found that greater than 90 percent of patients who undergo bunion surgery are satisfied with the results.

Reasons that you may benefit from Minimally Invasive Bunion Surgery commonly include:

- Foot pain that limits your everyday activities, including walking and wearing reasonable shoes. You may find it hard to walk more than a few blocks—even in athletic shoes—without pain.
- Chronic big toe inflammation and swelling that doesn't improve with rest or medications.
- Toe deformity—a drifting in of your big toe toward the small toes.
- Toe stiffness—inability to bend and straighten your toe.
- Failure to improve with other treatments such as a change in shoes and anti-inflammatory medication.

Realistic Expectations About Bunion Surgery

An important factor in deciding whether to have bunion surgery is understanding what the procedure can and cannot do. Many patients who undergo bunion surgery experience a dramatic reduction of foot pain after surgery, along with a significant improvement in the alignment of their big toe.

Bunion surgery will not allow you to wear a smaller shoe size or narrow-pointed shoes. In fact, you should always wear shoes that are comfortable and fit the shape of your foot.

Preparing for Minimally Invasive Bunion Surgery

If you decide to have bunion surgery, you may be asked to have a complete physical with your primary care physician before surgery to assess your health.

Before surgery Dr. Buchanan will discuss with you the medical equipment that will make your recovery easier. This will include crutches, a knee-scooter, and a shower cover to keep your surgical dressing dry.

Your Surgery

Dr. Buchanan performs Minimally Invasive Bunion Surgery on an outpatient basis. You will most likely be asked to arrive at surgical center one or two hours prior to surgery.

At the surgery center, you will be evaluated by a member of the anesthesia team. Most bunion surgery is performed under ankle block anesthesia, in which your foot is numb, but you are awake. Sedation is given (like a colonoscopy) so you are very relaxed and will not remember the procedure. General anesthesia is rarely needed. The anesthesiologist will stay with you throughout the procedure to administer other medications, if necessary, and to make sure you are comfortable.

The surgery takes about one hour. Afterwards, you will be moved to the recovery room. You will be ready to go home in one or two hours.

Dressing Care

You will be discharged from the surgery center with bandages holding your toe in its corrected position. You also will wear a special postoperative surgical boot to protect your foot. Sutures are typically not needed due to the small size of the incisions. To ensure proper healing, it is very important not to disturb your dressings and to keep them dry. Use a cast cover over your foot while showering.

Bearing Weight

The day of surgery, you will be able to put weight on your heel and the outer part of your foot. Dr. Buchanan typically advised you to use a cane or crutches for the first few days after surgery. This helps to reduce pain. Knee scooters are great if you need to cover significant distances. You can gradually put more weight on your foot as your bone heals. However, walk only short distances during the first few weeks following surgery. If surgery was on your right foot, you will be able to drive once cleared by Dr. Buchanan.

Swelling and Shoe Wear

Keep your foot elevated as much as possible for the first few days after surgery, and apply ice as recommended by Dr. Buchanan to relieve swelling and pain. You will have some swelling in your foot for about six months. When cleared Dr. Buchanan, you may begin to wear athletic shoes or shoes with roomy toe boxes and soft materials. This generally is around 6 weeks after surgery.

Exercises to Strengthen Your Foot

Some exercises or physical therapy may be recommended to restore your foot's strength and range of motion after your surgery. Your surgeon may recommend exercises using a surgical band to strengthen your ankle or marbles to restore motion in your toes. Always start these exercises slowly and follow your surgeon's or physical therapist's instructions regarding repetitions.

Dr. Buchanan has extensive experience performing Minimally Invasive Bunion Correction and will ensure that you have the best possible outcome after your surgery.