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Hallux Valgus (bunion) surgery

What to expect following minimally invasive hallux valgus (bunion) surgery?

For 2 weeks following the operation, your foot will be in a rigid-sole post operative sandal. You are able to place weight on your heel but it is important to keep the foot elevated as much as possible during this time (“toes above the nose”).

Clinic visit #1 (2 weeks post operatively): Dressings and sutures come off. You will be instructed to use a bunion splint or custom toe spacers. You will continue using the post-operative sandal for an additional 4 weeks. A prescription will be provided to start physiotherapy focusing on the 1st MTP joint motion.

Clinic visit #2 (6 weeks post operatively): You will return to clinic for a checkup. We will obtain standing follow-up x-rays to make sure everything is properly aligned. At this point, you have already been working with physiotherapy on range of motion exercises, and gradually increasing your weight bearing capacity. Going forward, once swelling permits, you may transition to a comfortable shoe or sneaker and start fully weight bearing.

Clinic visit #3 (3 months post operatively): You return for an additional checkup & we obtain an additional set of x-rays. You continue physiotherapy to maximize range of motion and restore normal gait. Impact activities such as jogging are started at the earliest 4 months post surgery.

Additional clinic visits take place at 6 months and 1 year post-operatively.

Frequently asked questions:

How long before I can start walking? You may start walking on your heel immediately after the operation. It is important to elevate the foot as much as possible in the first 2 weeks following the operation. You will progress to full weight bearing at 6 weeks following the operation.

How long is the recovery? For most patients, it takes between 3 – 6 months to resume all their baseline activities. Swelling in the foot is common and may last for several months following the operation.



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How long should I expect to be off work? Most patients are off work for 6 – 8 weeks following bunion surgery.

When can I drive? If the surgery is on the left side, most patients are able to drive 2 weeks following the operation. If the surgery is on the right side, most patients start driving 6 weeks after the operation.

What types of problems can happen with minimally invasive hallux valgus (bunion) surgery? Complications after bunion surgery may include: swelling (may last up to 12 months), wound problems and infection (<1%), scar sensitivity and nerve injury (1%), CRPS (<1%), under or over correction (1%), delayed union or nonunion (3% and <1%, respectively), DVT (<1%), stiffness (5%), symptomatic screw (8%).

The vast majority of patients (95%) are satisfied following minimally invasive hallux valgus (bunion) surgery.