What causes Bunions and Bunionettes?

- Bunions and bunionettes occur almost exclusively in persons who wear shoes. People in primitive civilizations who spend their lives barefoot almost never develop these problems.

- Most shoes sold today have a toe box (front of shoe) that is designed more for style than accommodating the foot properly.

- The drawing on the left shows a shoe shape that would fit a normal foot well, and the one on the right represents a common shoe design with a narrow, pointed toe box that forces the first and fifth toes inward.

- For mild cases, simply wearing comfortable shoes with a wide toe box can relieve symptoms.

- To further relieve pain, a cushion can be placed between the big toe and the second toe to help correct the deformity.

- Also, donut-shaped pads can be placed over the bunion and bunionette to relieve shoe pressure over the painful area.

- For severe cases, surgery can correct the deformity and the prominent bone (see back side of this handout).

Treatment Options

- This drawing shows the bones of a foot that has developed a bunion.

- The great toe has been forced inward by the pointed, narrow shoe.

- This forces the metatarsal (MT) bone outward.

- The head of the MT becomes prominent and rubs on the shoe.

- The inflamed bursa sac between the skin and the prominent MT head is called the “bunion”.

Orthopaedics Surgeons or Podiatrists

If I need surgery, who is most qualified to perform it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orthopaedic Surgeons</th>
<th>Podiatrists</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend four years of medical school and receive MD degree</td>
<td>Are not medical doctors - they graduate from podiatry school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend five years of surgical residency training</td>
<td>Are not required to have surgical residency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform hundreds of bone and joint surgeries per year</td>
<td>Perform limited amounts and types of surgeries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons</td>
<td>? ? ?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Bunion Surgery

• The joint between the metatarsal bone and the big toe is opened.

• The prominent bump on the side of the metatarsal head is removed.

• A chevron-shaped cut is made in the metatarsal head

• The metatarsal head is moved over to help correct the deformity and the extra bone is further removed.

• A screw is placed to hold the metatarsal head in its new position and then the ligaments of the joint are closed to further correct the deformity.

Bunionette Surgery

• The joint of the 5th toe is opened

• The bump on the metatarsal head is removed

• The ligaments of the joint are closed to further correct the deformity

After Care

• The surgery is performed in the outpatient surgery center.

• You may choose general anesthesia or local anesthesia with sedation.

• You are allowed to be full weight bearing immediately. When you are on your feet, you will wear a special post-operative shoe.

• After about 4 weeks you can start wearing comfortable shoes like sneakers.

• After 2-3 months you can start wearing normal shoes.

Bunions and Bunionettes

Causes and Treatment Options

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