

OS20lite Surgery for Problems of the Small Toes

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at Joondalup Health Campus for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:



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This document will give you information about surgery for problems of the small toes. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What problems can happen to the small toes?

The three main problems that can happen are deformity, pain in your toe joints and metatarsalgia (pain in the ball of your foot). Toe deformities happen when the tendons that move your toes get too tight or out of balance. The toe can rub on other toes and on the inside of your shoe, causing pressure and pain (see figure 1).

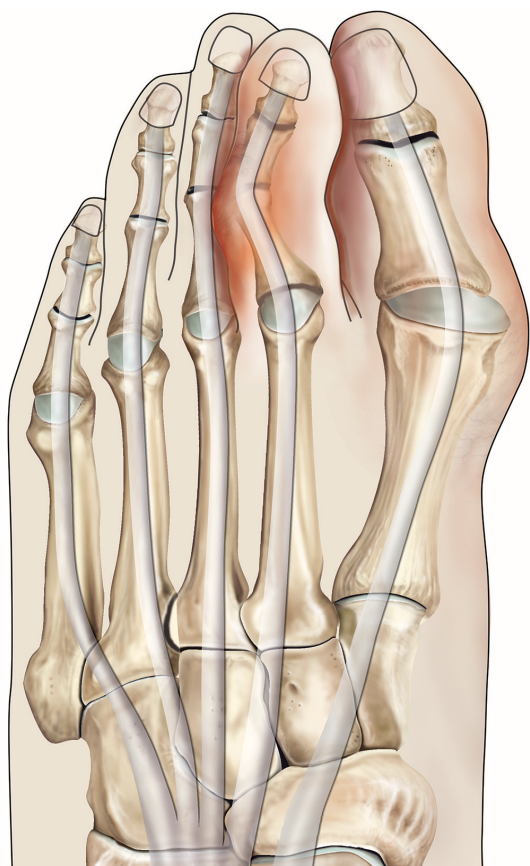


Figure 1

The problems caused by a hammer toe

Inflammatory arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis can damage your toe joints and this may make them come out of position.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your toes should be straighter, so your foot should fit more comfortably in a normal shoe.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Putting padding between your toes can help give you relief from the pain.

Using soft shoes from a good-quality shoe shop may be enough. If not, the orthotics department at the hospital will be able to give you advice about insoles or special shoes.

What does the operation involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible. The surgery may involve releasing or lengthening tendons, putting joints back into place, straightening a toe, and cutting and realigning the bones of your toes.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Blood clots
- Difficulty passing urine

2 Specific complications

- Damage to nerves
- Damage to blood vessels
- Problems with bone healing
- Loss of movement in your toes
- Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of your foot (complex regional pain syndrome)
- Pain in the ball of your foot
- The deformity coming back

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day or the day after.

Spend most of the time during the first week with your leg raised so that the swelling settles.

It can take 6 weeks or longer before the swelling has gone down enough for you to wear a normal soft shoe.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Summary

If you have problems with your small toes that are causing pressure and pain, surgery should straighten your toes and help make your foot fit more comfortably into a normal shoe.

Acknowledgements

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