

## Big Toe arthritis

Osteoarthritis of the Big toe is called **Hallux Rigidus**.

The normal cartilage is worn away and the underlying bone is exposed.

It refers to the **metatarsophalangeal joint**.



The joint has **lost its normal shape** and **cannot move freely**.

Patients experience **pain and stiffness** at the Metatarsophalangeal joint of the **big toe**.

It usually happens gradually and can be related to previous injury. Patients may notice a bump on the top of the joint.





After examining the joint to see how irritable and flexible it is, you will require **standing xrays** to assess the severity.

In the earlier stages it may only be evident on MRI scan or at arthroscopic examination.

**Management:**

It may be possible to relieve pain with a **special shoe or insole** that reduces movement at the painful joint.

If **surgery** is appropriate then there will be a discussion about options:

**Cheilectomy** involves removal of bone that is preventing movement

**Fusion or Arthrodesis** – removing the worn out joint and forming one long bone





**What to expect:**

The procedure will take up to 1 hour and can be done as day case or as an overnight case.

You will be advised to elevate the foot above the level of your heart for the first 2 weeks whenever possible

You will be reviewed at 1-2 weeks after the operation and then again as required

**Complications:**

While it is impossible to inform you of every possible complication the more relevant ones are discussed below

You may experience **pain and redness and swelling for up to 12 months.**

Fusion surgery will result in *loss of most of the motion* of your big toe but this often does not result in a significant functional deficit. It will still be possible often to run after the operation.

You will still be able to wear a small heeled shoe about 1 inch

Other complications include :

Infection

Wound problems

Nerve damage – resulting in altered sensation or increased sensitivity to pain

Failure of the operation to resolve your symptoms

Failure of the bone ends to fuse

Fusion of the bone ends in a position that is difficult to function, eg cocked up toe.

