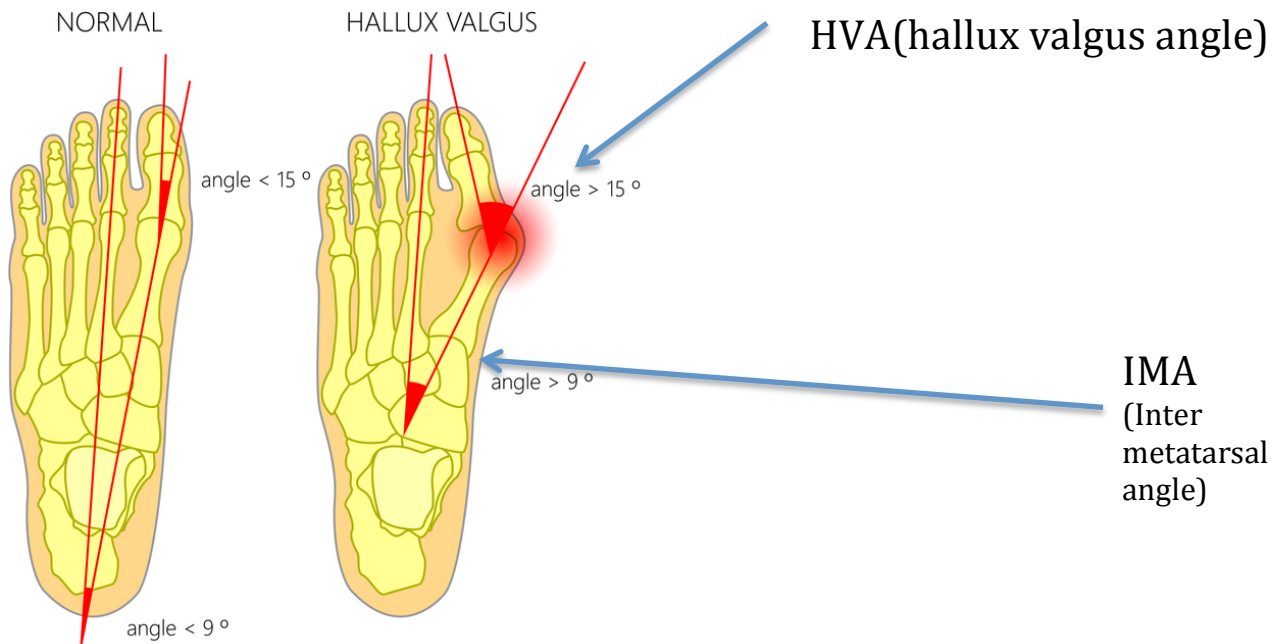


## Bunions and Claw toes

A **bunion** is a lump on the side of the foot involving the main joint of the big toe (the 1<sup>st</sup> MTP joint).

It is usually caused by a deformity of this joint called **Hallux Valgus** (big toe deviating away from the midline)



The cause is partly genetic and partly related to **pointy shoes and high heels**. This explains why the condition is more common in women.

There are no non surgical ways to permanently correct the deformity but an **orthotist or podiatrist** should be able to provide you with a **bunion splint** which may alleviate your symptoms.



**Surgery** should be considered for:

**Pain**

**Difficulty with foot wear**

Or if you notice that the bunion is getting worse (**progressive deformity**)

There are many operations described for hallux valgus.

The aim is to correct both the :

1. Intermetatarsal angle (IMA)
2. Hallux Valgus angle (HVA)

One example is the **scarf osteotomy with soft tissue correction**.

The scarf shape is derived from the carpentry industry and provides a stable method of **cutting the bone** and translating it before fixing it with screws. The intermetatarsal angle is corrected this way.

The **soft tissue release** corrects the hallux valgus angle by releasing tight structures between the first and second toes and tightening the capsule over the site of the bunion.



Following surgery you can expect to stay for **one night in hospital**

It is important to spend the **first two weeks with the foot strictly elevated** above the level of your heart for 23 hours a day.

A wound check is performed at the 2 week check

You will need to walk in a stiff sole open toe shoe for about 6 weeks.

An xray is then performed to confirm that recovery is occurring as planned.

**Work** (these time frames are speculative only):

Sitting duties at 3 weeks after surgery

Standing duties indoors 3 weeks- 2 months after surgery

Outdoor duties – 2 months after surgery

**Returning to driving** is not a straight forward question.

There may be insurance implications which need to be checked

It depends on which foot undergoes surgery and whether the car is manual or automatic

You must feel confident to use the brake in an emergency situation.

There are a number of **possible complications** that can occur from bunion surgery.

Some of these include:

**Long term pain and swelling** – up to 12 months

**Recurrence** of the bunion

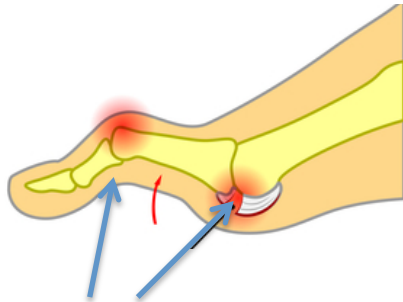
**Numbness and increased sensitivity** around the site of the surgery

**Stiffness** in the big toe

**Clawing** of the second toe is a relatively common condition.

It is often **seen together with a bunion** because there is a biomechanical association between them

It causes pain from rubbing on knuckle on the top of the toe with footwear and there can also be a painful prominence of the metatarsal head on the sole of the foot.



Sites of pain

It means that the second MTP (metatarsophalangeal joint) has worn out and there is now an imbalance of the muscles pulling on the toe.

A **podiatrist or orthotist** may be able to assist with toe straightening devices or advising or adjusting footwear.

**Surgery** to straighten the toe may require a **fusion** of the PIP joint where the knuckle is. This may mean a pin inserted in your toe that would need to be removed 6 weeks after surgery during a visit to the consulting rooms.

Following surgery the toe is usually shorter but straighter.

Possible problems with second toe straightening include

12 months of pain and swelling

Recurrence of the problem

Sensitivity and numbness around the toe