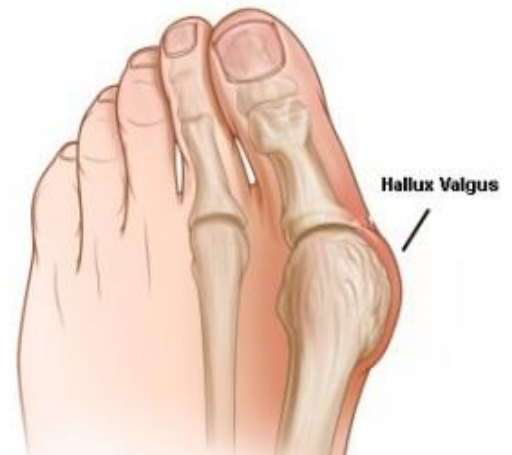


## What is a Bunion?

A bunion is a change to the shape of the big toe joint where the toe drifts sideways often taking the space of the next toe. The medical name for bunions is Hallux valgus. Due to changes in the joint and surrounding soft tissues, this deformity cannot be permanently corrected without surgery.



## Symptoms Include:

Thickening and inflammation of the overlying skin & tissues caused by footwear rubbing the bunion.

It also may become hot, swollen and painful.

The toe next to the big toe often gets pushed out of position and can become more painful than the bunion.

Pain under the ball of the foot due to deformity and a change in the function of the toes.

## What Causes a Bunion?

Bunions usually run in families where there is thought to be a strong hereditary link, being 3 times more common in Women than Men.

In some cases it can be due to other joint problems such as Arthritis, particularly rheumatoid arthritis.

Wearing shoes which are the wrong style or shape - that have thin flat-soles with a narrow toe box - places extra pressure on the toes, causing friction over prominent areas.

Feet that roll inwards put extra pressure on the bunion deformity making the problem worse in those people who already have bunions.

Being overweight also puts extra pressure through the bunion often causing pain.



## What Can I Do About It?

### Footwear

The most important change you can make is to wear shoes that fit well. Avoid high-heeled, narrowed or pointed shoes and make sure there are no seams to rub your toes. Wearing wide-fitting shoes with fastenings, such as laces or adjustable straps, are best. Ensure shoes are measured on the widest part of your foot (across the bunion). For more information see our footwear leaflet.



### Toe spacer

If you can easily straighten your big toe without causing pain you will most likely benefit from a silicone toe spacer. If you choose to use a spacer, build up the use gradually over a week and stop using it if you have new pain (see web address below for purchase information).



### Insoles

If your feet roll inwards you may find insoles helpful to support your foot. If you choose to use insoles build up the use gradually over a week and stop using them if you have any new pain (see web address below for insole options).



### Weight loss

If you are overweight it is really important to reduce your weight to a healthy level. This will reduce the amount of pressure on your feet thereby reducing pain and further deformity. *Leaflet available.*

### Pain relief

Please discuss the appropriate type of pain relief for you with your pharmacist or GP.

None of these treatments will cure a bunion but they are likely to reduce secondary problems such as pain, crowding of your toes, further deformity or breakdown of your skin due to shoe pressure.

**NB:** If you have persistent redness, heat, pain and swelling that cannot be explained by increased activity or rubbing from footwear please seek medical advice.

## Internet resources

Please note our recommendations are guidelines. We do not endorse any specific brand.

## Toe spacers

Available from most high street chemists.

<https://www.simplyfeet.co.uk/footcare/gel-cushioning/toe-cushioning/gelx-all-gel-toe-spreader.html>

## Insoles

There are many different types of insoles on the market which can make it difficult for you to choose wisely. We have recommended an insole that we have used for many years within the NHS to good effect.

[www.shoeinsoles.co.uk/express-orthotics-firm-density-blue-34-length-insoles.html](http://www.shoeinsoles.co.uk/express-orthotics-firm-density-blue-34-length-insoles.html)

## Wider fit shoes for bunions

Here are a few options for wider fitting footwear that our patients find useful.

[www.widerfitshoes.co.uk/pu+foothealth+bunionshammertoes+1](http://www.widerfitshoes.co.uk/pu+foothealth+bunionshammertoes+1)

[www.cosyfeet.com](http://www.cosyfeet.com)

[www.simplyfeet.co.uk/brands/dr-comfort.html](http://www.simplyfeet.co.uk/brands/dr-comfort.html)

## Weight loss

Request our 'Managing Healthy Weight' Leaflet or go directly to the website;

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/start-the-nhs-weight-loss-plan/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/start-the-nhs-weight-loss-plan/)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity)

## Further Information:

If you have followed the advice given above for at least 12 weeks and your symptoms have not started to improve or are still not manageable. Please contact the Podiatry department for further advice using the details below and we will be happy to advise you on the next steps in your treatment plan.

Podiatry department - **01633 615225** or email [risca.podiatry@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:risca.podiatry@wales.nhs.uk)

**"This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg".**