



Common Age-Related Foot Problems & How to Treat Them



Bunions



A bunion is a foot deformity characterised by deviation of the bones around the big toe joint of the foot.

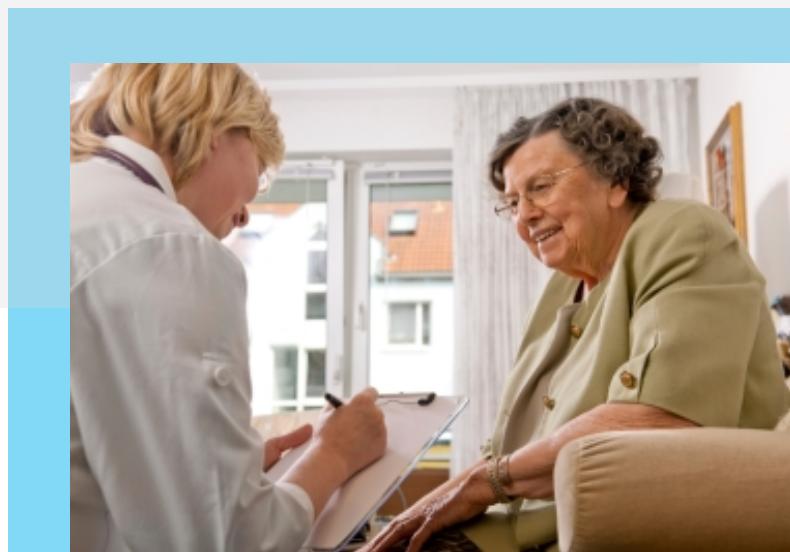
As a result of bunions, there is a large bony lump or exostosis on the inside of the foot and the toe is pointed across towards the smaller toes.

It is a common problem, more so in women and has been attributed to tight fitting footwear.

Bunions most commonly affect the inner foot at the base of the big toe but also can affect the outside of the foot at the base of the little toe, referred to as a 'bunionette' or 'tailor's bunion.'

Treatment of bunions can include;

- Rest
- Icing
- Alteration of footwear
- Foot support (orthotics)
- Medications
- Steroid injections
- Surgery



Early Signs, Common Causes and Prevalence

Early Signs:

- Thick rough area of skin
- Hardened, raised bump
- Tenderness or pain under the skin
- Flaky, dry or waxy skin



Common Causes:

- Genetic factors
- Poor foot mechanics
- High heeled or narrow footwear
- Trauma to the toe



Prevalence of Bunions

- The prevalence of bunions is approximately 23% in adults aged 18 to 65 years old
- Approximately 35.7% of elderly people aged over 65 have bunions
- It is more prevalent in women than men

Calluses & Corns

Calluses and corns are thick, hardened layers of skin that develop when your skin tries to protect itself against friction and pressure.

Calluses

Calluses are rarely painful. They usually develop on the soles of your feet, especially under the heels or balls, on your palms or on the knees. Calluses vary in size and shape and are often larger than corns.

Corns

Corns are smaller than calluses and have a hard centre surrounded by inflamed skin. Corns tend to develop on parts of your feet that don't bear weight, such as the tops and sides of your toes and even possibly in between. They can also be found in weight-bearing areas. Corns can be painful when pressed.





Causes

Pressure and friction from repetitive actions cause corns and calluses to develop and grow. Some sources of this pressure and friction include:

- **Wearing ill-fitting shoes:** Tight shoes and high heels can compress areas of your feet. When footwear is too loose, your foot may repeatedly slide and rub against the shoe. Your foot may also rub against a seam or stitch inside the shoe.
- **Skipping socks:** Wearing shoes and sandals without socks can cause friction on your feet. Socks that don't fit properly also can be a problem.

Prevention

These approaches may help you prevent corn and calluses:

- **Wear shoes that give your toes plenty of room.** If you can't wiggle your toes, your shoes are too tight. Have a shoe shop stretch your shoes.
- **Use protective coverings.** Wear felt pads, non-medicated corn pads or bandages over areas that rub against your footwear. You can also try toe separators or some lamb's wool between your toes.

Foot Problems Related to Diabetes

Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes cause damage to blood vessels and peripheral nerves that can result in problems in the legs and feet.



Early Signs

- Fungal infections of the nail which can appear as thickened, discoloured and at time brittle nails
- Hammertoes, or bent toes due to muscle weakness
- Bunions, or the angling of the big toe toward the second toe
- Ingrown toenails
- Cracking of the skin of the feet, especially heels, due to dry skin

How To Prevent Diabetes Related Feet Problems

- Check feet regularly for sores, blisters, redness and calluses
- Trim toenails with clippers regularly in a straight line
- Wear closed-toe shoes and do not walk barefoot
- Wear shoes that fit well.
- Protect your feet from the heat and cold
- Don't smoke