



Dr. Horacio E. Oduber
HOSPITAL

+ Rehabilitation



Hallux Valgus
(Bunion) Surgery



What is a bunion?

Hallux valgus is often referred to as a bunion deformity. The big toe drifts towards the smaller toes and a small bump appears on the inner aspect of the foot. Also, a red area or swelling in the region of the big toe joint appears. Most people have no symptoms but some develop pain over the bunion and difficulty wearing shoes.



What does the operation involve?

The operation itself involves making an incision over the affected toe, cutting and realigning the bones and fixing them using small screws and staples (if appropriate to achieve a better alignment and biomechanics).

Is it painful?

Whilst you are in hospital the medical staff will give you pain killers as required and prescribed. When you are at home you may find Paracetamol or Ibuprofen (if tolerated) useful for controlling any pain.

How long does recovery take?



- Most patients will go home the same day or stay in hospital for one night. You have only a padded dressing and bandage to the wound and will be given a special shoe, which helps to offload the forefoot. The physiotherapist will give instructions on how to wear the shoe as well as the use of crutches if necessary.

- For the first two weeks you are advised to restrict your walking distance to within the house and garden and keep it elevated to reduce swelling. Your dressing will be changed at around 14 days and the stitches are usually dissolvable.

- You will need to wear the special shoe for around 6 weeks. Following this it is advisable to wear loose fitting shoes (sports shoes). Normal footwear (which is well fitting) can be worn about three months after the operation.

How do I care for my foot at home?

For the first 7 days after surgery:

- Keep your leg elevated (raised) as much as possible, as this will help minimize swelling and pain. Only walk to the toilet and back, always using wearing your surgical shoe.
- You must wear your surgical shoe at all times when you are weight-bearing (i.e standing or walking) but it can be removed when resting or in bed.
- Take your painkillers at regular intervals and as prescribed, starting before the anesthetic wears off. Even if you do not have any pain, it is advisable to take the anti-inflammatory tablets (if prescribed), as they reduce swelling.

• Ice can be used to reduce pain and swelling. At home, you should wrap some ice cubes or a bag of frozen peas (or similar) in a damp tea towel and place behind your knee; this should be held in place for no more than 20 minutes at a time, but you can do this several times a day. We advise that you place it behind your knee rather than on your foot, as this will prevent your wound from getting wet and can also help the anaesthetic last longer. Always check your skin afterwards, as ice can burn and cause blisters. For this reason, you should never place plastic bags of ice or frozen vegetables directly onto the skin.

• **To reduce the risk of DVT (deep vein thrombosis) or the formation of blood clots:**

1. drink plenty of fluids, but avoid alcohol
2. do not smoke, as smoking impairs wound healing.

• **Help your blood to circulate to your operated foot by:**

1. rotating the ankle and bending the knee regularly
2. walking short distances in and around the house.

• Please keep your wound dry (do not bath or shower) until you have had your next appointment, approximately 2 weeks after surgery.



5 - 7 days after surgery:

- If all is well, you will be able to increase your activity, although it will still be a bit painful. You should continue to rotate your leg regularly as this will minimize swelling.
- We will advise you to start walking on your heel, using your crutches for balance and supporting your weight on your shoe. Throughout the week, you should build up to putting weight on your whole foot, still using your shoe.

10 - 14 days after surgery:

- When your stitches and dressings have been removed, you will be able to bath, shower and swim as normal.
- You can massage your scar with vitamin E oil, cream or gel to improve its appearance.

Walking with crutches:

- Place both the crutches forward in front of you. (about one step length in front).
- Then you place the operated leg in the middle of the two crutches.
- While standing on the operated leg, and pressure with both arms through the crutches, bring the unoperated leg forward.
- Continue to repeat these steps. - Crutches, operated leg, unoperated leg.

Stairs:

1) Ascending stairs:

- a. With the arm rail on one side and the crutch on the other side, place the unoperated leg on to the stair.
- b. Follow with the operated leg. Finish by placing the crutch onto the step above.

2) Descending stairs

- a. Place the crutch on the stair below. Follow with the operated leg.
- b. Last, place the unoperated leg on the step below. Repeat steps accordingly.

Rehabilitation Department

Tel: 587-0311 / 527-4600

Fax: 588-2576

Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital

Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Boulevard # 1

Tel: (+297) 527 4000

www.arubahospital.com