

## Bunions

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A bunion is a bony protrusion at the base of your big toe that occurs when your big toe angles toward your next toe. The joint and bone at the base of your big toe are thrust out beyond the normal profile of the foot, producing a recognizable bump. Bunions can start out as small bumps, but sometimes can be large and are accompanied by redness and swelling. A similar protrusion called a "bunionette" or tailor's bunion can develop at the base of your little toe. Most bunions are not serious, unless they cause harsh pain.

Arthritis or heredity can cause bunions, and people with flat feet or low arches are more likely to develop them. In most cases, however, bunions result from forcing your foot into a tight shoe with a pointed toe and high heel, or a shoe that's too small. You can't make the bunion go away, but you can relieve pain and keep a bunion from becoming worse by eliminating the source of irritation.

You should purchase shoes with plenty of toe room, and wear over-the-counter arch supports. In some cases, the bunion may have to be surgically repaired. The longer you wait to correct the problem, the greater the chances for surgery become.