

# Hallux Valgus (Bunion) – Scarf Osteotomy



The Department of Orthopaedics offers specialist medical and surgical treatments on musculoskeletal disorders, joint replacements, foot and ankle disorders, among other trauma injuries. Our consultants and surgeons work closely with sports medicine physicians, physiotherapists, podiatrists and other healthcare professionals to help patients return to their normal activities after surgery.

## What is hallux valgus?

Hallux Valgus is a medical term used to describe a 'bunion'. It is a very common condition which affects both men and women, but women are more prone to it. Bunions often become symptomatic in people between 30 to 50 years old, but can also develop much earlier.

Symptoms include pain, swelling and redness over the inner aspect of the big toe joint. Pain may also be felt under the lesser toes in the form of a burning sensation or a feeling of 'walking on pebbles'. Surgery can provide you with pain relief, with over 100 operations available to treat this condition. Modern methods have distinct advantages over procedures in the past to relieve pain, reduce complications and offer longer lasting results.



Before



Six weeks after operation

# Surgery

## Scarf Osteotomy

- An incision is made between the first and second toes to release tight tissues on the side of the big toe.
- A second incision is made along the inner side of the big toe joint to remove the bony bump (or bunion). The main bone (the first metatarsal) is cut, re-shaped and fixed together with two small screws.
- The operation takes about 45 minutes and can be performed as a day surgery.



## Anaesthetic

- The surgery is usually performed under general anaesthetic.
- An 'ankle block' will be performed while you are asleep to help with pain relief. This anaesthetic nerve block usually lasts for a few hours but pain relief medication will be administered. Do not be alarmed if your foot feels numb when you awake. It is due to the anaesthetic nerve block that will wear off in the same way after an injection at a dentist.

## Post-surgery

- A large bandage will be placed around your toe, foot and ankle, and should be kept on to maintain the position of your big toe while the soft tissues heal.
- You will be provided with a post-operative shoe that allows you to put as much weight on your foot as you are comfortable to. Occasionally crutches may be advised.
- **It is important that you elevate your foot as much as possible in the first two weeks after surgery** to reduce swelling and promote wound-healing. It is the most effective method of pain relief in the early post-operative period.

# After surgery

## How much rest do I need?

In general, a Medical Certificate will be provided for the following durations:

- Four weeks for patients with desk-bound jobs
- Six weeks for patients whose jobs involve standing or walking
- Eight weeks for patients doing manual labour



Depending on your job, we will provide an appropriate Medical Certificate to you.

## How should I care for my wound?

### • Exercises

The more exercises you do, the sooner you will be able to regain movement in your toe.

- Try to wiggle your toes in the bandage from day one
- After two weeks, you may still feel some limitation by the bandage, but you should try to:
  - Hold your toe with your hand and move it up and down
  - If the second or third toes were also operated on, it is very important to bend them downwards regularly to prevent them from angling upwards
  - Scrunch up your bed sheets with your toes
- After six weeks, continue to do the above exercises and try to:
  - Move your toes as much you feel comfortable
  - Massage your scars (rubbing hand cream into them may help but it is the action of rubbing that is more important than the type of cream)
  - Put weight on your toe to bend it upwards

### • Swelling

Swelling always occurs after a foot surgery and it can take up to six to nine months to fully subside. Keep your foot elevated (ideally above the level of your heart) in the early days after operation to bring down swells.

### When can I drive?

You must be fully mobile, comfortable and able to make an emergency stop without worrying if it might hurt to do so. Having a right foot operation will affect your ability to drive for a longer period than a left foot operation.

### Will the metalwork need to be removed?

The metalwork used at surgery is rarely removed after surgery.



## Possible risks and complications

Complications associated with this procedure are rare. However, they can include:

**Stiffness:** Your feet will be very swollen at first and will need to be elevated. This swelling will subside in the next few weeks and months, but it will still be apparent for up to six to nine months. Your toe will also feel stiff, but will gradually regain its original movement.

**Infection:** There is always a risk of infection with all surgical procedures. The incidence is only about 1% for this procedure. You will be given one dose of intravenous antibiotics during surgery to prevent an infection. You will also need to keep your foot elevated for ten days. If an infection occurs, a course of oral antibiotics is normally able to resolve it. If you are concerned, please contact our clinic for an earlier appointment.

**Nerve damage/scar sensitivity:** A nerve which lies beneath the incision may get damaged during the procedure. It is usually a bruise that will recover. If damage is permanent, it will leave a small patch of numbness, but otherwise, it will not cause any disability. Approximately a quarter of patients experience sensitivity in the scars after a foot surgery. For most patients, this can be resolved by rubbing the scars once they have healed to de-sensitise them.

**Undercorrection:** Occasionally, the deformity of the toe is not wholly corrected. This is more common in severe cases, but is rarely a problem.

**Overcorrection:** In very rare cases, the toe is over-straightened and angles away from the foot (hallux varus). This is a rare complication that will require a supplementary surgery.

## Follow-up appointments

- A follow-up appointment will be arranged approximately two weeks after your surgery to review and change your dressings. Please do not remove the dressings on your own prior to this appointment.
- Your foot will be re-bandaged to protect the position of your toe for another four weeks. Please continue to wear your post-operative shoe to walk.
- At approximately six weeks after surgery, you will be seen again to remove your bandages. An X-ray will also be taken to monitor the healing of your bones.

## For more information

### Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

1 Jurong East St 21, Singapore 609606

[www.ntfgh.com.sg](http://www.ntfgh.com.sg) | [www.jch.com.sg](http://www.jch.com.sg)

### Clinic opening hours

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am – 12.30pm (Selected clinics only\*)

Dental Clinic: Monday – Thursday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Friday: 8.00am – 5.00pm

\*Please refer to our websites for more details.

### General enquiries & appointments

General enquiries line: 6908 2222 (24-hr)

Fax: 6716 5500 | Email: [contactus@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:contactus@nuhs.edu.sg)

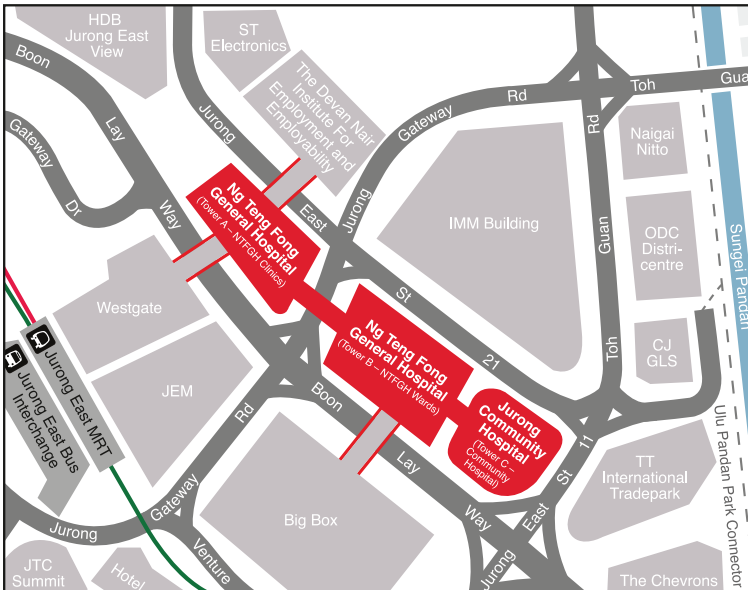
Appointment line: 6908 2222 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 8.00am – 12.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: [appointment@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:appointment@nuhs.edu.sg)

Dental appointment line: 6716 2233 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: [JHCampus\\_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:JHCampus_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg)

## Getting there



### By train

Alight at Jurong East MRT Station

### By bus

#### Jurong East Bus Interchange

41, 49, 51, 52, 66, 66B, 78, 78A, 79, 79A, 97, 97E, 98, 98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 160A, 160M, 183, 183B, 197, 333, 334, 335, 506

#### Along Boon Lay Way

49, 99, 333, Private bus service 625, 990

### Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition. Information is accurate at the time of printing.