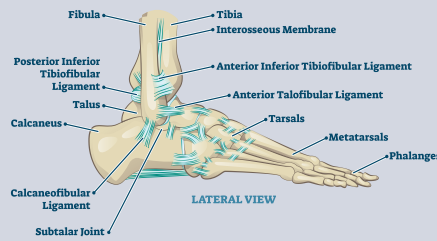


Foot and Ankle Conditions and Treatments



BUNIONS

A bunion is a common foot deformity that occurs most frequently in females. Those who wear high-heels and poorly fitting shoes that are too narrow, too small and tight are at increased risk. This condition tends to run in families as well (genetic). A bunion develops at the base of the big toe and can cause pain and change of foot shape along with causing pain in shoes and the inability to walk well in normal shoe gear.

The joint at the base of the big toe is called the metatarsophalangeal joint. Bunions arise from growth of new bone at this joint which can result in a bony bump that sticks out. The tendons that hold the toes in alignment begin to tighten and can pull the big toe further out of alignment. A bunion typically causes a red, swollen bump at the base of the big toe that is painful while wearing a

shoe or anything that puts any pressure against the toe. Walking and wearing shoes may become difficult due to pain. Significant deformity (malalignment and overlapping of the big toe onto the second and third toes) and arthritis can develop with an advanced bunion.

Prevention is key; you can lower the risk of bunion formation by wearing proper-fitting shoes. Ice, anti-inflammatory medication, orthotics (arch supports), and comfortable shoe gear may help relieve symptoms. For painful or severe bunions, surgery may be recommended. The procedure may include removing the bunion (extra bone) and realigning the bones by altering the surrounding ligaments, tendons, and bones. Discuss with your physician what surgery is right for you.