



Hallux Valgus (bunion removal): aftercare advice

Information for patients from Day Surgery

The following advice is to help you understand what you should do and expect following your surgery.

When you get home and for the first few days after your surgery

- Arrange for someone to collect you from hospital and look after you for the first 24 hours.
- For the first 24 hours you should not stay in bed. Move around, gradually increasing your activity, as you feel able to.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, do not drink alcohol, smoke, or take sleeping tablets for 24 hours after your operation.
- You can eat as normal.
- We advise you to drink plenty of fluids, not alcohol, for the first 24 hours following your surgery.

How will I feel after surgery?

You will be given painkillers to help with any discomfort after your operation. Everyone reacts to the anaesthetic differently, however feeling sick is common and we do our best to avoid this.

What happens after surgery?

- Your foot will be in bandaging and a surgical shoe will be provided to allow you to weight-bear whilst protecting your foot, unless specifically advised not to by your surgeon.
- You will be provided with crutches for support. Please use these as advised by your physiotherapist.
- It is important to elevate (raise) your ankle as much as possible in the first few weeks. We recommend you move your ankle as much as possible.



How should I look after my dressing?

Do not touch your dressing, until you are told you can by your discharge nurse.

You must keep your dressing dry. Either wash around the wound area, or place your foot on a board or soap tray placed across your bath. If you do not have a bath, keep your foot outside the shower, placing it in a bowl to catch the water that may run off it.

What will happen at my follow-up appointment?

Your stitches and bandaging will be removed at your two week follow-up appointment and your dressings changed. At this stage, if you have had bunion surgery, you will be allowed to bend your big toe to help prevent stiffness.

You will still need to wear your surgical shoe for weight-bearing for another five to six weeks.

If a pin has been used to hold a lesser toe straightening, this will be removed in clinic at your five week follow-up appointment. Your skin will need protecting for a further week until the site of the pin is fully healed.

If you have had a soft tissue release for lesser toe deformity surgery, and no pins have been used to hold the toe in position, you can go back to wearing comfortable shoes if your wound has fully healed at two weeks.

When can I start my normal activities again?

Returning to impact sports should be possible three to six months from the date of your operation. Brisk walking and low impact sport activities can be started earlier.

When can I drive again?

You will not be able to drive for six weeks after your surgery, due to the surgical shoe you need to wear. Once the shoe has been removed it will depend on how comfortable you feel driving and whether you are able to perform emergency procedures, for example an emergency stop. If you have questions or concerns about this, please speak to your surgeon at your six week follow-up appointment.

When can I return to work?

This will depend on how much your work needs you to put weight on your affected foot. If your work is sedentary (you mainly sit at a desk) and you can keep your foot elevated, then you can return to work after two weeks. If this is not possible, and your job is more active, you should be expected to return to work after six to eight weeks. Please speak to a member of the hospital team about getting a sick note, if needed.

What should I do if I have any concerns or questions?

If your foot is painful, you should take mild painkillers, such as paracetamol. If your pain becomes unbearable, you should contact Day Surgery on one of the numbers listed below, or go to your nearest Emergency (ED) Department immediately.

If your foot swells, or becomes very cold or discoloured, loosen the bandages and telephone your GP or go to your nearest ED or Day Surgery Unit.

- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 61 62 63 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**
Telephone: 01227 78 31 14 (7:30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 68 76 45 (8pm to 7:30am)
- Day Surgery Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 23 44 99 (7:30am to 8pm)
Telephone: 07887 65 11 62 (8pm to 7:30am)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation