



Hallux Valgus Surgery: Proximal Opening Osteotomy Postoperative Recovery Protocol

<u>Type of Procedure:</u>	Outpatient
<u>Length of Procedure:</u>	2-3 hours
<u>Anesthesia:</u>	General or Sedation with nerve block

Hallux Valgus and Bunions: What is it?

The big toe of the foot is called the hallux. If the big toe starts to deviate inward in the direction of the baby toe, the condition is called hallux valgus. As the big toe drifts over into valgus, a bump starts to develop on the inside of the big toe over the metatarsal bone. This bone prominence on the inner edge for the metatarsal is referred to as a bunion.

Bunions can be hereditary but may also be caused or aggravated by shoe wear. The condition is far more common in women than in men, and rarely occurs in individuals who do not wear shoes. Once a bunion is present, the hallux valgus deformity worsens slowly over time.

The treatment of a bunion depends entirely on how uncomfortable it is. Since the pain from a bunion is always aggravated by shoe wear, the symptoms will often depend on the type and size of shoes worn. The perception of pain or discomfort varies. There are some individuals who have a small bunion that is very uncomfortable since it limits their ability to wear shoes comfortably. On the other hand, some individuals may have quite significant deformities which they find to be an annoyance, but do not limit their activities in anyway. **The reason to operate on a bunion is for pain only – the cosmetic appearance does not influence the decision as the appearance of toe after the operation is not always pleasing to every patient. Two sizeable incisions are required to perform this operation.**

Realistically, there are only two ways to treat a bunion: either change in the size and shape of the shoe, or change in the size and shape of the foot. Due to the multiple styles of shoes, it is obviously much easier to change the size and shape of the shoe in the male than the female.

Once a bunion gets to be irritating or painful, and shoe wear is uncomfortable, surgery may be recommended. There are many different surgical procedures that can be performed. The decision to perform one type of surgery or another is based upon the extent and magnitude of the bunion deformity, the presence of arthritis in the big toe joint, and the space between the first and second metatarsals, which is called the intermetatarsal angle.

What is the proximal metatarsal osteotomy operation?

This operation is designed to correct the big toe deformity, the bunion, as well as the deviated position of the 1st metatarsal. In order to correct the 1st metatarsal, a bone cut (an osteotomy) is made. The type of osteotomy which I use is called a proximal opening wedge osteotomy. The bone cut is fixed a plate and screws. **Bone graft is taken from the heel to allow the fusion to occur. These plate and screws typically stay in forever.**

As with all types of bunion surgery, you will be able to wear shoes more comfortably. This does not mean however that you will be able to wear narrow tight shoes.

General recovery factor:

- You are not allowed to walk on the foot after surgery.
- You should plan to use crutches or a walker if you need support.
- You may drive by about 4 days if it is your left foot, and 6 weeks if your right foot.
- The foot will be immobilized in a boot for about 6 weeks.
- You will not be able to get the foot wet while the foot is bandaged.
- The foot will remain puffy and swollen for 6-12 months.
- Certain shoes cannot be worn while the front of the foot is swollen.

Specific Post-Operative Course:

Day 1

- Foot wrapped in bulky bandage and splint (partial cast)
- Ice, elevate, take pain medication
- Expect numbness in foot 4-12 hours then moderate to severe pain
- Bloody drainage through bandage expected
- Do not change bandage

Day 10-14

- First follow-up in the office, X-rays taken
- Dressing changed and a boot is applied to the foot
- You may walk on the heel of the boot only for balance.
- A silicone toe spacer will be dispensed

6 weeks

- X-ray taken, if bone healing, full walking permitted in boot.
- Walking will be in a boot or a surgical shoe for 2 weeks, after which you can transition to a stiff shoe for 1 more month.
- Do not attempt to walk at this time without the shoe for 2 more weeks.
- Physical therapy may be necessary for about 1 month.

Example of a Proximal Opening Wedge Osteotomy Surgery for a Bunion – Your fixation/hardware and position of the toe will vary depending on your anatomy.

Before



After



This patient has problems with the lesser toes that required correction. This is a commonly needed in addition to correction of a bunion.