

# Bunions

A bunion, one of the most common foot conditions, occurs when the great toe bends inwards toward the lesser toes over time (**Hallux Abductovalgus**). This results in an enlarged joint which often causes pain. In addition, the great toe may overlap the second toe, which can cause this to develop into a **Hammer toe** with an associated corn.

The bunion joint is usually red, warm, and swollen and may develop into a secondary arthritis with limited toe extension (**Hallux Rigidus**). Also common is the presence of bursitis in proximity of this joint.

Bunions can have a variety of causes. **Overpronation** is a main cause of bunion development. The forces on the forefoot are generally directed from the inside of the shoe against the great toe. Although tight shoes with a narrow toe box do not initiate the problem, they tend to

exacerbate the rate of development as well as the severity of the deformity.

**Osteoarthritis** and **Rheumatoid Arthritis** can also be contributing factors. Muscular imbalance in the foot, family history of bunions and neuromuscular disease can all play a role in bunion development.

Bunions are best treated before they develop too far along. If the bunion is already advanced, shoes with a wider toe-box and lower heels are recommended. Special orthopedic shoes, which can be stretched to accommodate the bunion, may be required. Your Orthotist may also recommend **Custom Foot Orthoses** to decrease the abnormal forces that an overpronating foot is creating. They keep the foot properly aligned in a more stable position which helps to redirect the forces acting to force the big toe towards the lesser toes. You may also find relief by using a bunion pad, toe spacer or night splint (see below).

Surgical removal of the bunions (Bunionectomies) and re-aligning of the toes may be necessary in severe cases.

## Various temporary devices worn to alleviate bunions.

A.) bunion pad



B.) gel toe spacer



C.) bunion night splint

