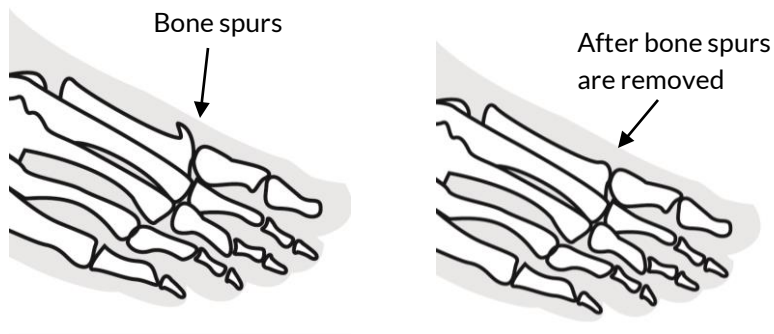


# 1st MTP Joint Spur Removal: A Guide to Recovery After Surgery

The big toe knuckle joint or "1st Metatarsal Phalangeal (MTP) Joint can develop wear and tear arthritis, called osteoarthritis. This means that the cartilage gets thin and the joint often gets large bone spurs. The toe joint can then become stiff or painful.

Removing the bone spurs on the back of the joint (a 'dorsal cheilectomy') can help improve the movement in the toe joint and reduce pain. During the surgery, a cut will be made on the skin and the bone spurs and part of the arthritis will be taken out with saw or a chisel.



This type of surgery is performed in the operating room most commonly under general anesthesia. Sometimes this surgery can be done with a spinal anesthetic (freezing the legs) or a block (freezing part of the leg). This surgery usually takes around 30min. The surgery is a daycare procedure meaning you will go home the same day as the surgery.

## Going Home:

- You must have someone take you home after surgery, even if you are taking a taxi

## Care of your Incision & Wound:

- Do not remove dressings. Your surgeon will change the dressings at your follow up appointment
- It is normal to have clear, reddish or yellow drainage on the dressings
- If the tensor bandage becomes loose, rewrap it snugly
- If the tensor bandage feels too tight, you may take it off and rewrap it. It should feel snug.
- Wear the 'post-operative' shoe that you were prescribed

## Bathing:

- Keep your dressings/splint dry
- Cleanse around the foot or cover the foot with a plastic bag while bathing. Seal the plastic bag with duct tape
- If your dressings/splint gets wet, contact your surgeon

## Activity:

- Most patients are allowed to put weight through the foot right away, but it may be uncomfortable
- You may want to put weight through the heel of the foot or use crutches for a few days
- Slowly resume normal activities like walking; recovery is gradual and it is normal to feel weak and tired for a couple of weeks after surgery

## Pain:

- Discomfort will be mild- moderate for the first few days and will gradually get better

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- Use pain medications as prescribed by your surgeon
- In the first day or two after the surgery, it is better to give the pain medication regularly e.g. every 4-6 hours, rather than wait until the pain is bad.
- Gradually reduce your pain medications as your pain lessens

## **Swelling**

- Expect swelling for a few weeks following the surgery. This is normal. The toes often swell up like sausage.
- Elevate the foot to the level of the heart for the first 48 hours after surgery to try to lessen the swelling
- When resting, sit with the foot supported with pillows and elevated
- The swelling takes months to go away. It is quite normal to have swelling, especially when you are active, for 4-6 months after surgery.

## **Icing:**

- You can apply ice packs or use a Cryo Therapy 'Ice Machine' to reduce pain and swelling
- Apply ice for 10-20 minutes, 4-6 times per day
- Never apply ice directly to skin

## **Return to Work:**

- When you are able to return to work depends on:
  - the kind of job you have and its physical demands
  - how much pain & swelling you have after your injury
  - how your recovery is progressing
  - if you are able to modify your job or work from home

- Your surgeon will help you decide when to return to work
- Most patients with a desk job will want to take off a minimum of 3 days but often 2 weeks. Keep your foot elevated at work when possible
- You may need to be off work for up to 2-3 months for physically demanding work
- If you need a form filled out for your work, please drop it off at the office as soon as possible. There will be a fee to have the form filled out.

## **Healthy Eating:**

- Start with clear fluids after surgery
- Gradually increase to a well balanced diet as your appetite allows
- Drink at least 6 cups of fluids daily

## **Going to the Bathroom:**

- Changes in medications, activity and diet can cause constipation (hard, dry bowel movements)
- To avoid constipation, drink lots of fluids, eat high fibre foods such as prunes, fruits, bran, whole grains and vegetables
- Take a stool softener or laxative if needed. Ask your surgeon or pharmacist to suggest one.

## **Smoking:**

- Smoking causes problems with the healing of bones and tissues
- Not smoking or smoking less for 2 months before surgery and for 3-6 months after surgery will reduce the chance of a problem with healing

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- visit [www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca) for information about tools and medications to help you quit smoking

## **Driving:**

- Do not drive while taking pain medications
- Discuss with your surgeon when it is safe to drive
- If your right foot was operated on or if you drive a manual vehicle, you will not be safe to drive for at least 1-3 weeks
- If your ability to safely drive (e.g swerve sharply, perform an emergency stop) is impaired, your insurance may not be valid in the case of an accident

## **Your Medications:**

- Resume your regular medications unless instructed otherwise by your surgeon

## **Supplies/special equipment:**

- **Post-operative shoe:** a special shoe is required after surgery. Your surgeon will prescribe this. It can be purchased at a medical supply store, such as Island Orthotics, McGill & Orme or at One Bracing @ Rebalance<sup>MD</sup>
- **CryoTherapy "Ice Machine":** This can be used as an alternative to ice packs to help reduce pain and swelling. Your surgeon can prescribe this. It can be purchased at a medical supply store, such as Island Orthotics, McGill & Orme or at One Bracing @ Rebalance<sup>MD</sup>
- **Crutches are optional;** they can be purchased from a medical supply store, some pharmacies or One Bracing @ Rebalance<sup>MD</sup>

## **Follow Up Appointment:**

- A post-operative appointment should be scheduled for approximately 10-14 days post surgery
- Call the office if you do not have an appointment scheduled
- Write down your questions for the surgeon before the appointment

## **Call your Surgeon if you have:**

- Increasing pain or swelling that is not relieved by elevation, ice and pain medications
- Bleeding that continues even after applying direct pressure for 10-15 minutes
- Incisions that are red, puffy, hot or leaking fluid more than 48 hrs after surgery
- Fever greater than 38°C
- Signs of circulation problems (e.g coolness, change in skin colour, numbness) which is not relieved by rest
- Ongoing nausea and vomiting
- Inability to pass urine for more than 8-10 hours
- Chest pain or shortness of breath that is unusual for you

## **If you cannot reach your Surgeon:**

- Call your family doctor, go to a walk-in clinic or hospital emergency department

## **Non-emergency health information and services:**

- HealthLinkBC [www.healthlinkBC.ca](http://www.healthlinkBC.ca)
- Tel: 811 from anywhere in BC
- Tel: 711 for deaf and hearing impaired assistance (TTY)

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Rebalance<sup>MD</sup>

*The information in this handout is intended only for the person it was given to by the health care team. It does not replace the advice or direction given to you by your surgeon.*