What *is* a Bunion?

A bunion is an enlargement of the joint at the base of the big toe—the metatarsophalangeal (MP) joint—that forms when the bone or tissue at the big toe joint moves out of place. This movement forces the toe to bend toward the others, causing an often-painful lump of bone on the foot. Because this joint carries a lot of the body's weight while walking, bunions can cause extreme pain if left untreated.

The HOW & WHY

- Bunions form when the normal balance of forces exerted on the joints and tendons of the foot is disrupted. This disruption can lead to instability in the joint and cause the deformity.
- They are brought about by years of abnormal motion and pressure over the MTP joint.
- They are usually caused by the way we walk and our inherited foot type.
- Neuromuscular disorders or congenital deformities can cause bunions.
- An unsupported shoe can contribute to further hypermobility. Narrow-toed shoes can aggravate symptoms.

SYMPTOMS

- Development of a firm bump on the outside edge of the foot, at the base of the big toe.
- Redness, swelling, or pain at or near the MTP joint.
- Corns or other irritations caused by the overlap of the first and second toes.
- Restricted or painful motion of the big toe.
TODAY’S PODIATRIST TALKS ABOUT

BUNIONS

Treatments

What can YOU do?
- Use commercial, nonmedicated bunion pads.
- Wear wide shoes. Avoid high-heeled shoes.
- Apply ice packs to reduce swelling.
- If pain and other symptoms of inflammation persist, see your podiatric physician.

Conservative Treatments:

1. Padding and taping: minimize pain and help keep the foot in a normal position.
3. Physical Therapy: provides relief from pain and associated soft tissue involvement.
4. Orthotics: prevent worsening of the deformity.

Surgical Options are used when early treatments fail or the bunion progresses past the threshold for conservative treatment. Surgery will remove the bony enlargement, restore the normal alignment of the toe joint, and relieve pain.

Hereditary?

Although bunions tend to run in families, it is the FOOT TYPE that is passed down—not the bunion.

The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) is the nation’s leading professional organization for today’s podiatrists. Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) are qualified by their education, training, and experience to diagnose and treat conditions affecting the foot, ankle, and structures of the leg. APMA has 53 state component locations across the United States and its territories, with a membership of more than 12,500 podiatrists. All practicing APMA members are licensed by the state in which they practice podiatric medicine. For more information, visit www.apma.org.