

HAMMERTOE CORRECTIVE SURGERY

More Than 200,000 Cases of Hammertoe Are Diagnosed in the U.S. Each Year

Hammertoe is More Common in Women as They Tend to Wear Tighter, Narrower Shoes With Increased Heel Height

A hammertoe is a deformity of the toe that causes it to stay in a curled or flexed position, resembling a hammer. It can be caused by a muscle imbalance, arthritis, or wearing shoes that do not fit well. Over time, the toe may get stuck in a bent position. When this happens, pain, irritation and problems finding shoes that fit properly along with other problems can occur.

The following guide has been prepared to help patients understand what to expect when corrective surgery is required for this condition.

01 | When Surgery is Necessary

When hammertoe is diagnosed and you can still straighten your toe(s), your medical provider may first recommend treatment with padding and strapping, and/or shoes that can alleviate symptoms. If this type of treatment does not work, if you experience skin infections or you can no longer straighten your toe, your physician may recommend surgery.

02 | How Surgery is Performed

Several surgical options are available, depending on your circumstance. Some options include:

- **Flexible Hammertoe** – If the surgeon can straighten the toe, a tendon transfer procedure may be used. This involves rerouting the tendons to help pull the bent joint into a straight position.
- **Fixed Hammertoe** – if the toe has become fixed (stiff), there are two options:
 - o Joint resection – ligaments and tendons are cut to help straighten the toe. The end of the bone is removed to allow the toe to straighten completely and pins are temporarily used to keep the toe straightened. The pins are removed 3-4 weeks post surgery.

- o Fusion – ligaments and tendons are cut to help straighten the toe, and the ends of the bone are cut so the toe can be straightened. Pins or screws can be used to help keep the toe straightened while the bone ends heal together.

Whichever method is chosen, hammertoe correction is typically done as an outpatient procedure.

03 | What to Expect After Surgery

You will be given a special shoe to wear after surgery and will be asked to keep your foot elevated. Depending on your ability to walk, you will be given either crutches or a walker. Stitches and pins or screws are usually taken out within a few weeks. Your foot may not be submerged under water until these are removed. Your surgeon may ask you to do exercises to help with the flexibility of the toe and maintain motion. It is important to follow your treatment plan and follow up with your surgeon as instructed for a full recovery.

For more information on post-op recovery, please visit: <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000575.htm>

Did You Know?

75% of Americans will experience foot health problems

References

<http://www.aofas.org/footcaremd/treatments/pages/hammertoe-surgery.aspx>

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=a00160>