

## Is reconstructive surgery necessary?

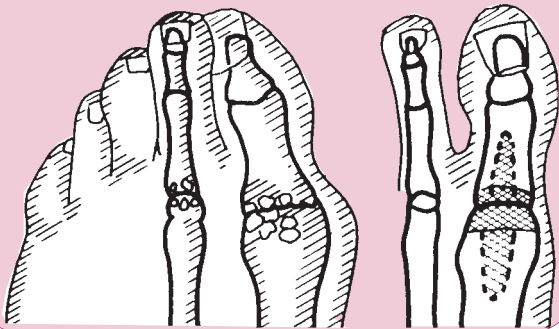
Bunion, hammer toe and deformed toe joint surgery are elective; however the deformities are progressive and non-reversible if not surgically corrected. Important factors to be considered in the decision to have surgery are 1) Your level of discomfort from the deformity; 2) Inability to wear desired shoes and 3) Limitations made on your lifestyle and career activity levels.

Potential complications following reconstructive surgery may include post-operative infection, delayed healing, prolonged swelling and joint stiffness. Fortunately these complications, though infrequent, can be treated.

You deserve the opportunity to question the Doctor as much as you need. Above all you should feel comfortable with the skill and integrity of your surgeon. You should be well informed about the proposed treatment, including the before and after care. It's very important to have a physician who will carefully individualize your treatment because each and every foot has unique characteristics of structure.

### Toe Joint Implant for Severe Arthritis

The joints of one or more toes are painful and swollen (*left*) due to severe arthritis. Joint replacements (*right*) are the ultimate solution to relieve pain and to restore function. Partial or full joint replacement is considered only when conservative measures have been ineffective. Surgery is done on an outpatient basis with local anesthetic.



**Dr. Brian J. Zinsmeister**

Dr. Zinsmeister received a B.A. in Biology at Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA and a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree from Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia. He completed his podiatric residency at Highlands Center Hospital in Denver, Colorado.

After accruing the required years of surgical experience and passing a rigid qualifying examination, he became Board certified in foot and ankle surgery through the American Board of Podiatric Surgery. Approximately only 30% of the podiatric profession nationally is certified through the highly respected American Board of Podiatric Surgery.

In 1985, he set up private practice in Andover and Quincy, Mass, later moving to Lexington. He is married and the father of two daughters. He resides in Andover.

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# DEFORMED TOE JOINTS

## BUNIONS, HAMMER TOES, & ARTHRITIC TOE JOINTS



*Foot Pain Relief  
for Adults and Children*

**Dr. Brian J. Zinsmeister**

Board Certified in Foot & Ankle Surgery by the  
American Board of Podiatric Surgery

**T**he pain in your foot is killing you. There is a painful swelling or a bump on the side of your big toe by the ball of your foot. Your toe may even angle toward your second toe. It might even lay on top of the second toe or be cocked up or hammered. Nothing relieves the pain. Not aspirin, not soaking your feet in cold water, not wearing wide-toed shoes. The pain may even keep you awake at night.

## Bunion is a dislocated joint.

The tendency to develop bunions is inherited. Bunion deformities -- with or without symptoms -- often begin in adolescence and progress throughout one's lifetime. Males and females both can develop bunions, however women tend to be treated in greater numbers because they wear more tapered shoes. Although shoes, by themselves, do not cause bunions, people with a foot type that is prone to this kind of deformity, can aggravate the deformity with tighter shoes.

## Treatment favors surgery

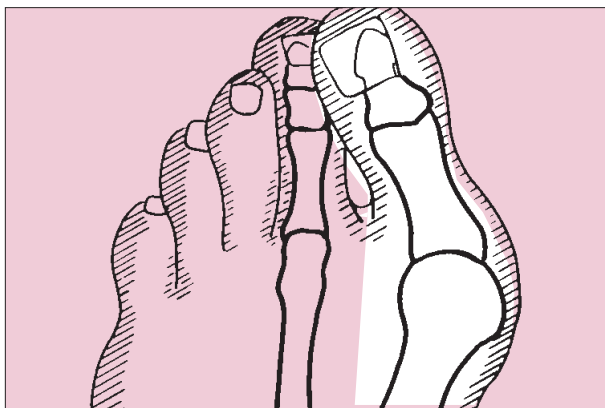
Conservative measures may be successful if undertaken early enough to prevent serious dislocation of the toe joint. Some patients self-medicate their bunions with over-the-counter, non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. They may naturally choose more comfortable foot wear. Many attempt to use bunion shields or other devices, which can accommodate the swelling, but have no effect on minimizing the size of the deformity or of reversing it.

Conservative means such as orthotics (arch supports) are only moderately effective in slowing down this progressing problem. Steroid injections, so effective for neuromas and heel spurs, do not

help bunions. They can weaken the tissues and thin or ulcerate the layer of skin around it, making repair more difficult. Usually the best hope is surgical intervention to reconstruct the deformed joint.

## Surgical intervention effective

Podiatric surgeons have developed many highly successful outpatient surgeries that realign bony structures to correct bunions, hammer toes and replace painful toe joints damaged from arthritis. Modern surgical techniques and special instruments allow for more predictable results and minimized



**Bunion:**An irritating bump along the inside of the big toe joint, maybe a crooked toe. Usually corrected by realignment of bony structures. Surgery is performed under local anesthesia on an out-patient basis.

post-operative discomfort. Still, surgery is not suited for everyone. Age, lifestyle, overall medical condition and other factors must be considered. Surgery is usually performed on an out-patient basis in the hospital, using local anesthesia, with the aid of intravenous sedation.

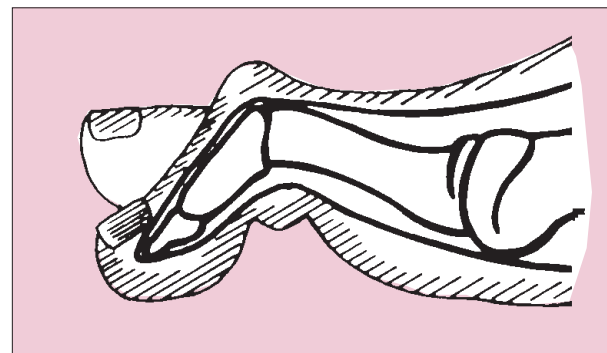
**"I couldn't stand the pain. I feared surgery. Dr. Zinsmeister explained everything thoroughly and helped me make a comfortable choice. I'm glad I opted for surgery because I'm rid of the pain and can sleep at night."**

--Patient

## Post-op recovery period

Most bunion procedures require some type of walking boot or shoe post-operatively; but, in most cases, patients can walk with caution immediately. All patients are encouraged to take some time off from work after bunion surgery to reduce swelling and aid healing.

Patients usually can return to some form of regular enclosed shoes in four to seven weeks following the surgery.



**Hammer Toes (Dislocated Toe Joint):** The joint buckles upwards and rubs in the shoes. Correction can be a simple releasing of tendons or possibly combined with removal of a small piece of bone.