



*Medical Foot  
Care Center*



**NEW**  
Minimally  
Invasive  
**Bunion**  
Procedure



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Brian Middleton, D.P.M.



## What is a bunion?

**A bunion is a bone deformity on the foot that forms when the toe moves out of place.**

Bunions form as the joint located at the base and side of the big toe becomes enlarged. This enlargement creates a bump that causes friction and pressure as it rubs against your footwear. As your



big toe pushes up against your other toes, it forces the big toe joint in the opposite direction. **Bunions can become very painful** as the abnormal positioning continues to enlarge your big toe, further crowding your other toes. A bunion looks like this:



## What causes bunions?

Bunions can be caused by a number of different factors. **The primary cause of bunions is heredity.**

If your parents or someone else in your family has bunions, it's likely you will too. Bunions are genetic in nature, but **another common cause that helps a bunion develop is wearing shoes that don't fit your foot correctly**, especially shoes that squeeze your toes together. For example, women are very prone to getting bunions because they regularly wear high heels. High-heeled shoes force the toes into an

abnormal position; they also put added pressure on the foot which causes the foot to have to work harder. **It's important to note that shoes don't actually cause the bunion, but aggravate it and make it worse.**

Bunions can also be caused by issues related to foot abnormalities or injuries. **A person born with a bone abnormality**, or people with flat feet or misaligned feet, are more likely to develop bunions because it causes them to walk unevenly. This, in turn, puts more pressure on one joint or another in their feet. **Any kind of excessive stress** on your feet that requires you to spend hours in an unnatural position can also increase the likelihood of getting a bunion.

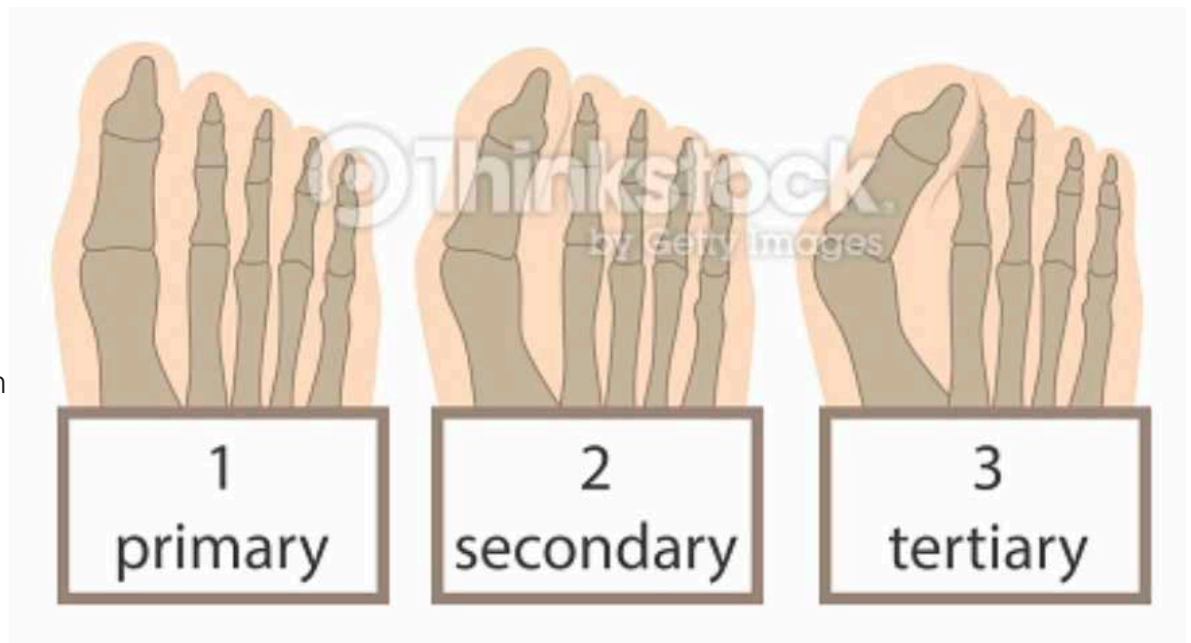




## Are you ignoring your bunion?

A bunion won't go away on its own. It will continue to get worse over time and become more and more painful. **It's hard to ignore something that is causing you pain.** You will constantly be reminded of your bunion as it continues to grow and becomes easily aggravated when it rubs against your footwear, causing friction and pain. Aside from the pain it causes, you also don't want to ignore your bunion because it could cause arthritic changes to your big toe. This will cause the joint to stiffen due to cartilage damage, and may result in loss of big toe movement. The bunion may be the result of another underlying issue that needs

your attention, like an injury, faulty foot structure, misaligned feet, or improper footwear. Many people ignore the pain caused by a bunion and avoid getting treatment because they are afraid,



**Stages of Bunion Development**

especially when they hear the word 'surgery.' Bunion surgery is the best treatment in some cases, but there are conservative and alternative options to try first.



## What are alternative treatment options?

Bunions are not able to heal themselves because they are a bone deformity. The goals of bunion treatment are to relieve the pressure and pain caused by the irritation of the bunion and to stop the continued growth of the bunion. Before settling on bunion surgery, there are other treatment options that are worth giving a try such as:

- The use of protective padding or bandaging that helps eliminate the friction caused by rubbing against shoes
- Accommodating the bunion with carefully selected and proper fitting footwear
- Anti-inflammatories
- Wearing splints at night to help the toes and joint align correctly
- Physical therapy that helps maintain the joint mobility and prevent stiffness or even arthritis
- Custom orthotics that help stabilize the joint by placing the foot in the correct position for walking and standing





## What is a minimally invasive bunion procedure?

Depending on the severity of your bunion, treatments range from conservative to surgical intervention.

**If conservative treatments fail, surgery may be the only way to correct your bunion deformity.**

Instead of traditional surgery, there is another option called **minimally invasive bunion surgery**. This procedure corrects the position of the big toe joint with 3 or 4 small incisions rather than traditional surgery performed through large cuts which often produces unsightly scars. It's performed in a way that causes little or no trauma to the patient using small tools like miniature fluoroscopes, lasers, endoscopes or laparoscopes.

### The benefits of minimally invasive bunion surgery are:

- Minimal bleed
- Less pain
- Less anesthesia, including no need for general anesthesia
- Small incisions
- Minimal scarring
- Causes limited discomfort
- Typically results in a timely return to normal activity





## Can any surgeon perform this bunion procedure?

- No, very specific training in minimally invasive techniques are required.
- A new set of technical skills along with specialized instruments and x-ray equipment are required
- Not all foot and ankle surgeons perform minimally invasive bunion procedures
- Dr. Middleton is trained in minimally invasive surgery and has practiced in Rome, GA for over 25 years

## Where is the procedure performed?

Dr. Middleton performs surgery in a state certified, licensed ambulatory surgery center which provides the highest level of safety and sterility.

## Is it for me?

Most people are eligible for a minimally invasive bunion procedure. However, it's not everyone. Some deformities are too large or not suitable to be corrected using these techniques. Consultation with Dr. Middleton will allow you to discuss your options in detail and decide which method of bunion correction is appropriate for you.