



TOE PAIN

Soreness in one or more toes

CAUSES

BUNION

Bunions are painful enlargements of the joint in the big toe due to constant pressure from ill-fitting shoes. The bunions are caused by the displacement of two major bones of the foot which may cause a noticeable projection on the inside part of the foot.

Symptoms:

- Pain in the big toe
- Bony protrusion at the base of the big toe
- Toe is pushed inward so that it overlaps the second toe

DO:

- Rest until pain disappears.
- Change type of footwear into thongs or flat sandals that are open-soled and ideally has space for the bunion.
- Consult a doctor for treatment options available.

DON'T:

- Don't wear high-heeled and extremely pointy shoes as these may cause bunions.

GOUT

See page 61.

HAMMERTOE

A hammertoe is a toe that is painfully arched at its middle joint and curls downwards caused by ill-fitting shoes, arthritis, or sometimes diabetes. Existing treatment is conservative and requires no complicated procedures.

Symptoms:

- Pain in one or more toes
- Arched toe that is bent upwards at the joint in the middle

DO:

- Change footwear into an open-soled one that does not oppress the toe further.
- Try commercially available products designed to relieve hammertoes.

DON'T:

- Don't wear ill-fitting shoes.





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INGROWN TOENAIL

Improper trimming of the toenails can lead to an ingrown nail. The nail pierces the adjacent skin as it grows and therefore causes a painful wound, and visible swelling in the area. Ill-fitting shoes and injury are other causes of an ingrown toenail.

If condition is severe, ingrown toenails may require surgery. It is best to treat the problem early before infection sets in.

Symptoms:

- Pain in one or more toes
- Red, swollen, painful skin around the toenail
- Green or yellow discharge from the wound

DO:

- If there is no swelling and the nail is just starting to pierce the skin, separate it with a small wisp of absorbent cotton coated with a substance called *colloidion* which holds the cotton in place and waterproofs the area.
- Soak affected foot for 15 to 20 minutes in warm salt water. Massage the skin away very gently but firmly.
- Trim toenail straight across instead of in an arc-like shape. This will discourage ingrown toenails.
- Apply a small amount of antiseptic to heal the wound.
- To clean, place antiseptic and cover with a piece of gauze. Change dressing frequently.

DON'T:

- Don't allow dirt to settle in as this may cause infection.

MALLET TOE

A mallet toe occurs when the joint at the end of a toe is painfully arched and cannot straighten due to bone and muscle imbalance, rigorous physical activity, or arthritis. This condition may cause pain and discomfort in the affected person.

Symptoms:

- Pain in one or more toes
- Arched toe that is bent at the joint at the end

DO:

- Change footwear into an open-soled one that does not oppress the toe further.

DON'T:

- Don't wear ill-fitting shoes.

OTHER CAUSES

Other causes include dislocation, fracture or trauma to the toe.