Information Sheet

Bunions (Hallux Valgus)

Bunions are caused by too much pressure being placed on the inside of the foot at the base of the big toe. In turn, this forces the figure toe towards the other toes. A hard, bony lump then forms on the joint (the knuckle bone) which causes pain, inflammation and swelling. Sometimes a soft fluid swelling develops over the bunion. The first metatarsal bone that runs along the foot to the big toe can also be pushed out of alignment, causing instability and difficulty in walking.

An examination will reveal whether you have a bunion and your big toe will be tested for its range of motions. An x-ray will show the extent of the bunion – this will also help the surgeon decide if surgery is necessary.

Bunionectomy/ First Metatarsal Oseotomy

This involves the surgical removal of the bony lump and realignment of the first metatarsal bone. Loose ligaments are also tightened to correct the direction of the big toe. Sometimes, further surgery needs to be carried out but this should be discussed with your surgeon.