



## Evaluating Your Foot & Ankle Pain

After your exam, your physician may recommend surgery to solve your pain.

- An extensive health history and lab tests helps prepare you for surgery.
- Ask your doctor how long your recovery time will be, if you will need help at home after surgery, if you will need any pre-surgery medications and whether you should fast before your operation.
- Your doctor will choose the type of anesthesia that is best for you. It may be a local anesthetic (no pain at the site of your surgery) sedatives (keeping you awake but relaxed during the procedure) or general anesthesia (putting you to sleep during the surgery).
- Surgeries can be done in your doctor's office or a day surgery facility. Some surgeries require a 1-2 day hospital stay.

## What to Expect After Surgery

Your doctor will give you detailed instructions to follow after your surgery.

- Some pain is expected for 2-3 days.
- Ice can help reduce the pain.
- Elevate your foot above your heart.
- Take medications as directed.
- Keep your incision clean and dry.
- Tell your doctor if your incision doesn't heal, or is red or swollen.

## Tips For Healthy Joints



**Lose weight** – Extra weight puts more stress on your joints.

**Do low-impact exercise** – Swimming, cycling and gardening help firm up your arms and legs and burn calories.

**Wear sensible shoes** – Rubber-soled shoes provide cushioning.

**Lift with care** – Hold items close to your body and bend your knees.

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# Foot and Ankle Surgery



REDLANDS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL



## Diagnosing Foot Pain

Your physician will examine your feet, including your toes, ankles and your shoes. Be sure to give a complete medical history and the circumstances of any injury.

- Your doctor checks for tenderness, pain, lack of motion and reflexes.
- X-rays may be performed to detect any hairline fractures of the bones.
- New tests—Computed Tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) give more detailed images of the soft tissue and bones.

## Treating Foot Pain

**Severe Injuries:** Crutches or casts may be necessary.

**Orthotics:** Custom-made shoe insert made to fit your feet and give support.

**Physical Therapy:** Strengthens weakened muscles and tendons and teaches you how to avoid future injury. Physical therapy can include ultrasound, massage and whirlpool treatments.

### RICE

- **Rest**—taking it easy will allow your body to begin to repair itself.
- **Ice**—reduces pain and swelling. From one to three days, ice your injury for 20 minutes every 2 hours.
- **Compression**—such as an elastic bandage or cast, can decrease your pain and swelling by immobilizing your foot and ankle.
- **Elevation**—raising your foot above the level of your heart reduces swelling by allowing the fluid to drain away from the injury.

## Common Injuries

Because of the many movable parts, your feet and ankles are prone to injury and the effects of wear and tear. Diabetic and arthritic patients are extremely vulnerable to foot problems.

**Forward Motion Injuries:** Repeated flattening of the foot can cause the plantar fascia (the tendon in your heel) to stretch. This is a common injury from overuse, jogging, walking or biking. It may cause tendonitis and pain at the heel.



**Excessive Up & Down Foot motion:** Repeated pounding may cause stress fractures (hairline cracks in the bones of your feet) or shin splints (pain in the lower leg above your ankle).

**Sideways Foot Motion:** May cause over stretching of the ankle ligament resulting in ankle sprain.

## Foot & Ankle Conditions

**Bunions**—A bunion is a large lump on the side of your foot where your big toe meets your foot. Surgery to remove the bony bump and to reduce the distance between the first and second metatarsal bones will help reduce the pain and swelling of your foot.

**Arthritis**—Arthritis occurs most often in the joint of your big toe. For mild cases, the damaged bone in your joint can be trimmed or removed. Post-surgery you may need to wear protective shoes. Once your foot has healed, the joint will move normally. If the joint can't be repaired, a bone fusion may be done.

**Arthroplasty**—Surgical procedure using a pin to align the foot's bones. After removing arthritic bone growth, the pin is inserted and removed after healing. The entire joint may be replaced with an artificial joint. After a few days you will be able to walk. You may need a splint or a surgical shoe for a few weeks.

**Heel Problems:** Can be caused by a strain on the plantar fascia and can be treated:

- A small cut in the fascia near the heel bone.
- Shockwave therapy stimulates the plantar fascia and promotes healing without incision.

**Bone Spurs:** Can grow on the bottom or back of the heel or on the top of your foot. The spur is removed and adjustments made to the surrounding tendons or fascia. You may need to wear a cast or use crutches for a few weeks while healing.

**Toe Problems:** There are many problems of the toes such as, flexible and rigid hammertoes, curled fifth toes, toe spurs and corns.



**Hammertoe Symptoms:** Corns, irritation and pain when wearing shoes.

**Flexible Hammertoes:** Treated by repositioning the tendon on the top or bottom of the toe.

**Rigid Hammertoes:** Painful and may require removal of the joint or arthroplasty. Sometimes the joint is replaced by an implant. The toe will remain flexible after this surgery. Fusion is used when both sides of the joint are removed, the toe straightened and a pin used to hold the bones together. After recovery, your toe will be less flexible but more stable than before your surgery.

**Curled Fifth Toe:** When your fifth, or little toe curls in and goes under your fourth toe, it rotates and causes you to walk on the toe's side. Some skin and a section of bone may be removed allowing your toe to straighten. After this procedure you may need a protective shoe for a few weeks.

**Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome:** Caused by pressure on the tibial nerve ankle's inside. Symptoms include pain, a burning sensation or a tingling on the bottom of the foot. Treatments include:

- Orthotics or foot support devices.
- Steroid injections reduce swelling.
- Anti-inflammatory drugs.
- Surgical alternatives include: Incisions into the tissue to allow the nerve to expand, removal of a cyst or other obstruction pressing on the nerves.