

Operations for Lesser Toe Deformities

What does the operation involve?

Prior to the operation you will be seen in the Pre-assessment clinic or receive a phone call assessment. This is to ensure that you are fit to have surgery.

The operations for lesser toe deformities depend upon the age of presentation and type of deformity. Your surgeon will discuss with you the procedure that you require. Some procedures can be performed as a day case under local anaesthesia, whereas others may require a general anaesthetic and possibly an overnight stay.

Operative procedures include:

- Flexor tenotomy when a small cut is made on the under surface of the toe and the tendon excised so that the toe can straighten.
- Tendon transfer which allows flexible deformities to be improved by transferring the tendon from the bottom to the top of the toe.
- Joint fusion: Fixed deformities which can not be corrected by straightening the toe may require a bony procedure such as joint fusion or arthroplasty.
- Exploration and release of the metatarsophalangeal joint.
- Osteotomy of the metatarsals which involves more extensive surgery and involves cutting of the metatarsal bone and fixation with a screw.

What about pain?

Whilst you are in hospital you will be monitored and the medical staff will give you pain relief as required and prescribed. You will be given pain relief medication to take home. Advice regarding this will be given by the nursing staff before you leave hospital.

How long does recovery take?

The majority of patients will only have a padded dressing and bandage to the wound but there may be a wire protruding from the end of the toe. This is to hold the toe straight during the recovery phase. The wire will remain for 4 to 6 weeks and you will be given a special shoe, which helps to off load weight from the forefoot. The physiotherapist will give you instructions on how to wear the shoe and in the use of elbow crutches.

For the first two weeks you are advised to restrict your walking distance to within the house and garden and to elevate the foot as much as possible.

You are advised to keep the dressing clean and dry until the stitches are removed in clinic at approximately 7-14 days. If you have a wire in your toe, you will be seen again at 4-6 weeks, when the wire will be removed. Strapping of the toe may be required for a further 6 weeks and you will be advised regarding this at your follow up appointment.

Once the bandages (and wire) are removed it is advisable to wear loose fitting shoes (e.g., ECCO, Hotter or sports shoes). Normal footwear (which is well fitting) can be worn about three months after the operation.

When can I drive?

Patients having had only the left foot operated on will be able to drive an automatic car within two weeks. Those who have had an operation on the right side will be able to drive after about 4-6 weeks, depending on the operation.

You are advised not to fly after surgery for 6 weeks. Swimming will be possible once the sutures (and wire) have been removed and the wound has healed.

When can I go back to work?

This will depend on the type of work you do. If your work is desk-based you will be able to go to work after a few days provided you can rest and elevate your foot/leg during the course of the day.

If on the other hand you do heavy manual work you may need 8-10 weeks off work.

What are the possible complications?

- Infection in the wound or wire
- Prolonged swelling (this can last for 3 to 6 months)
- Nerve injury
- Recurrence of deformity

The above complications are rare but can occur.

Useful contact numbers

Orthopaedic pre assessment	0300 614 7778/7147
Day Surgery Unit Heatherwood	0300 614 4130/4131
Main reception Treetops Ward Heatherwood	0300 614 4159
Therapy Office Heatherwood	0300 614 4178
Physio/OT ward office Wexham	0300 615 3329
Ward 1 Wexham Park	0300 615 3010/3012
Booking Centre (appointments)	0300 614 7919 option 1
Orthopaedic post op	0300 6147207

For a translation of this leaflet or for accessing this information in another format:



Please contact (PALS) the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on:

Frimley Park Hospital

Telephone: 0300 613 6530

Email: fhft.palsfrimleypark@nhs.net

Wexham Park & Heatherwood Hospitals

Telephone: 0300 615 3365

Email: fhft.palswexhampark@nhs.net

Frimley Park Hospital Portsmouth Road, Frimley, Surrey, GU16 7UJ	Heatherwood Hospital Brook Avenue, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 7GB	Wexham Park Hospital Wexham Street, Slough, Berkshire, SL2 4HL
Hospital switchboard: 0300 614 5000		Website: www.fhft.nhs.uk

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