

## Orthopaedics – Fusion of Toe (first metatarsophalangeal joint)

### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

### Guidance for Patients

In most cases the operation is performed under general anaesthetic (whilst you are asleep). Alternatively, you may be able to have a regional anaesthetic, which just numbs the leg.

A surgical cut (3-5cm) is made on top of the main joint of the big toe. The bony bumps and remaining cartilage are cleared from the two joint surfaces. The two bones (first metatarsal and proximal phalanx) are placed in the correct position, then rigidly held together using metal screws and possibly a plate. This allows natural bone healing, to fuse your big toe.

Once the operation is completed the wound is closed with stitches, local anaesthetic is given to provide pain relief for the first few hours after surgery then a bulky bandage along with a surgical sandal is applied. We will provide you with crutches and pain killers, as required.

The operation is usually undertaken as a Day Case; that is you will go home the same day as your operation.

The basic recovery time for this operation is approximately eight weeks. Full recovery can take several months.

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your GP surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or Doctor's surgery. Smoking has a big impact on bone and skin healing; also it increases your risk of a blood clot.

### Find out your BMI

Follow this link to the [NHS BMI Calculator](#)

### BMI of 25+

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher the [Better Health Let's Do This – Lose Weight](#) website provides online support to help you lose weight and includes access to the NHS 12 week weight loss plan.

The NHS 12 week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- [One You Eat Better \(website\)](#) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet
- [Better Health - Get Active \(website\)](#) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition.

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

### Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

### GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain, inability to weight bear on this limb or a significant reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face -to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

## Contact Us

[trauma.ortho@nhs.net](mailto:trauma.ortho@nhs.net)

01922 721 172