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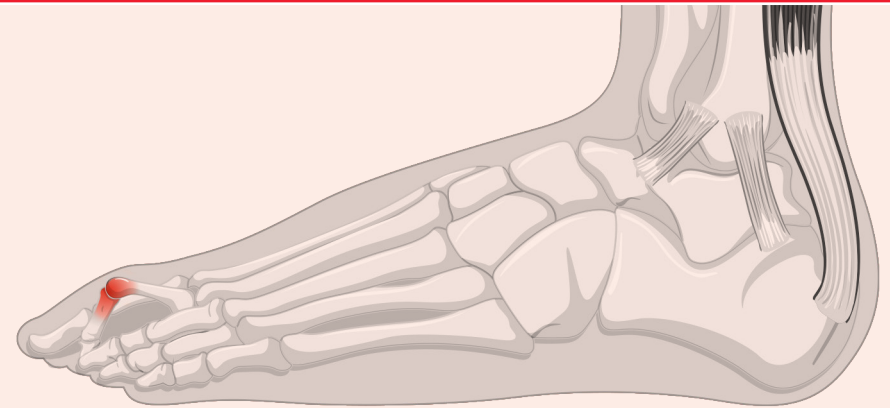
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Information for patients

Diabetic Foot Minor Ops - Toe Clawing

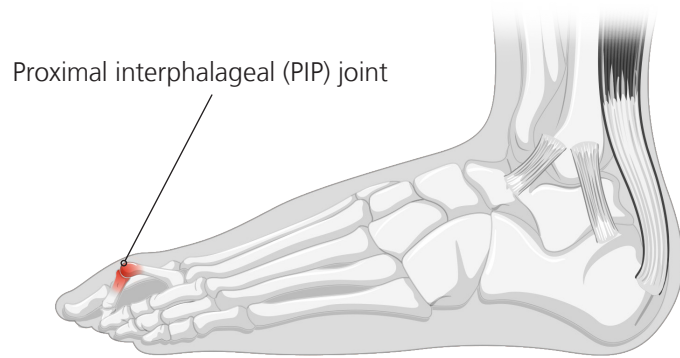


Foot and Ankle



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What is toe clawing?



Toe clawing is very common in patients who have diabetes. It happens when the tendons that move the toes get tight or are out of balance. This can cause the top of the toe(s) to rub on the inside of your shoes or develop pressure damage on the tip of the toe(s). This can then lead to ulceration and potentially infection in the bone.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your toes should be straighter, so your foot should fit more comfortably in your normal footwear. This will decrease your risk of developing ulcers and therefore decrease your risk of infection.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Placing padding around the toes or using toe protection covers can help ease rubbing on the toes.

Using soft shoes with plenty of room for your toes may also help to stop rubbing. You may have had advice about this, or had custom shoes provided, by the orthotics team in the Diabetic Foot Clinic.

If you get hard skin on your foot, you may need to have it removed regularly by a podiatrist (a specialist in treating problems of the lower legs and feet).

Notes:

Diabetic minor ops checklist

On the day of your appointment, please make sure you bring the following with you:

- ☒ Your appointment letters
- ☒ A list of your current medication
- ☒ Wear loose trousers, a skirt or shorts
- ☒ Someone to drive you home
- ☒ Darco Shoe (given to you in the Diabetic Foot Clinic)
- ☒ Simple painkillers (such as Paracetamol)

If these measures do not work, or you are thought to be at high risk of developing toe ulceration, the Diabetic Foot Team may refer you for an operation to straighten your toes.

What will happen if I decide not to have surgery?

The Diabetic Foot Clinic will give you advice on how to care for your feet and how to spot signs of ulceration. They will give you advice regarding toe protection with padding, toe covers and changes to your footwear.

What does the operation involve?

You will be reviewed by one of the Foot & Ankle surgeons in clinic for assessment and you will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding your treatment. If you and the Consultant agree that this operation is the right thing for you, you will be asked to complete a consent form for the procedure. You will then be taken into the treatment room for your operation. This operation will be done with you awake, with local anaesthetic to numb the area.

The healthcare team will carry out a number of checks to make sure that you have the operation you came in for on the correct side. You can help by confirming to your surgeon and the healthcare team your name and the operation you are having.

A tourniquet may be used to help prevent bleeding during the procedure. The tendons underneath the affected toe will be divided either by using a needle through a puncture wound or sometimes we will need to make a larger wound to see the tendons before dividing them. **The operation will usually take 15-30 minutes depending on how many toes need operating on.**

After the operation, your foot will be dressed in bandages and you will need to wear the Darco shoe (given to you in Diabetic Foot Clinic) over them. You will be taken to a recovery area for monitoring and elevation of your feet before being discharged home.

We will arrange follow-up for you in the Diabetic Foot Clinic for review of your wounds at 7-10 days following your procedure.

It is important to leave the bandages intact and keep them dry. This may mean that you can't have a bath or shower until you have been seen in the clinic.

Complications and Risks of Surgery

- **Bleeding during or after the operation.** A tourniquet may be used to limit bleeding during your operation and the risk of ongoing bleeding is small. It is important not to do too much in the first few days and to keep your feet elevated when you are resting.
- **Infection.** It is important to keep your wounds clean, dry and covered in the bandages after the operation. Elevating your foot will help to limit swelling and will help with wound healing. If you are concerned about infection, please contact the Hummingbird Diabetic Foot Clinic and we will arrange an urgent review. You may require antibiotics or another operation.
- **Damage to nerves.** This can cause numbness in the toes or a tender scar, this can be temporary or permanent. You may already have numbness in your toes because of your diabetes.
- **Swelling in the toes.** This can take up to 6 months to settle down. Elevation usually helps.
- **Blood clots in your legs (Deep Vein Thrombosis or DVT) or lungs (Pulmonary Embolism or PE).** This can cause swelling, pain and redness in your leg, or chest pain and breathlessness. If you normally take blood thinning medication this can be restarted after your operation. You will be encouraged to keep moving your feet and ankles even if you are keeping your feet elevated. If you do develop sign of a blood clot or shortness of breath, chest pain or coughing up blood you will need to seek urgent medical help.

- **Loss of movement in your toes.** You may find it harder to move your toes after the operation. This can be caused by swelling or scarring. This often gets better with time.
- **The clawing can come back.** If this happens, you may require further surgery.

Recovering after your operation

For the first few days after your operation, try to keep your feet elevated at much as possible when at rest. You can walk around the house to go to the kitchen, bathroom and bedroom but otherwise you should try and rest your feet. You should wear the Darco Shoe over the bandages at all times.

You will be reviewed in the Diabetic Foot Clinic at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH) approximately 7-10 days after your operation.

Once we are happy that your wounds have healed, you can return to your normal footwear and activities.

If you have any concerns, please contact:

Foot & Ankle Team

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital (RJAH)
01691 404026 (Mon – Fri 8am to 4pm)

Hummingbird Diabetic Foot Clinic

The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH)
01743 261000 ext 3436 (Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm)

Surgical Assessment Unit

The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH)
01743 261000 ext 1813 (24hrs a day)