



**North Tees and Hartlepool
NHS Foundation Trust**

Benefits, risks and possible complications of having podiatric surgery

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

This leaflet tells you about the possible benefits and risks of having podiatric (foot) surgery.

What is podiatric surgery?

Podiatric surgery is the surgical treatment of problems affecting the bones, joints and soft tissues in your foot. The surgery is carried out by podiatric surgeons (specialist podiatrists who have trained in foot surgery).

Most podiatric surgery is carried out as a day case under local anaesthetic (you will be awake but will not be able to feel any pain), which means you are able to return home as soon as possible after the operation. It is important you are aware of the possible risks and complications, before you consent (agree) to foot surgery.

To reduce risks and avoid complications, you will be assessed (checked) and have investigations (tests) throughout your care.

These can include:

- asking you questions about your current and past medical and surgical history.
- having certain tests and investigations, such as foot x-rays, blood tests, circulation and blood pressure checks.

If any of these investigations or tests leads to concerns about the safety of surgery, a medical opinion from your doctor or consultant will be needed.

Sometimes your foot surgery may have to be delayed until the problem is treated or controlled, for example, if you have high blood pressure.

What are the risks and possible complications?

Although risks and complications are uncommon, the following are possible complications that may occur with any foot surgery:

- **deep vein thrombosis – DVT (blood clots in the leg veins) or pulmonary embolism – PE (blood clots in the lungs).**

All adult patients will have their risk of developing a blood clot assessed at their pre-assessment visit. The healthcare professional who carries out the risk assessment will discuss your risk factors with you and advise on treatment to reduce your risk.

You will be given information, 'Your personal advice for the prevention of venous thromboembolism (blood clots)', advising you on how to reduce your risk of developing a blood clot.

- **infection of your skin.** This can happen to 1 patient in every 83.¹ Infection of your skin can be easily treated with antibiotics.
- **infection of your bone.** This is rare and can happen to 1 patient in every 2,000.¹ This is a more serious complication; you may need another operation to remove the infected bone, a stay in hospital and long courses of antibiotics.
- **failure of the operation or recurrence of your foot condition.** This can happen to 1 patient in every 500.¹
- **delayed healing of the skin or bone in your foot.** Although you will be told how long your foot should take to heal, delays in healing of the skin and bone can occur. The information on healing times is given to you as a guide only and you should allow for this when planning your recovery.
- **prolonged swelling in your foot.** Swelling is always present after surgery as it is part of the normal healing process. Swelling lasting longer than expected can happen to about 1 patient in every 500.¹

- **haematoma.** This is a painful collection of blood within your foot at the operation site. This occurs very rarely and generally settles without any problems.
- **thick or sensitive scarring of the incision.**
- **loosening or movement of the screws or wires that have been put in to hold the bone in your foot.** Normally these are left in place, however you may get irritation or pain meaning the screws or wires have to be removed once the bone has healed. This can happen to 1 patient in every 60.¹
- **problems with local anaesthetic.** A reaction to the local anaesthetic used to numb your foot is rare and can happen to less than 1 patient in every 10,000.¹
- **nerve damage.** This is usually temporary, but can be permanent. Great care is taken to avoid damage to the nerves in your foot during the local anaesthetic and your operation
- **more pain after surgery.** The majority of patients who have foot surgery have less pain after their operation. However, you may have no improvement in your symptoms or more pain after surgery.
- **your bone may not fuse (join together).** The cut ends of the bone may not heal together as they should and your foot may take longer to heal or you may need to have another operation.
- **avascular necrosis.** This is a very rare complication. It is where part of the bone in your foot loses its blood supply. Your bone may then become weaker, change shape and become damaged resulting in problems such as arthritis in the joint.
- **Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome.** This is a very rare condition where pain develops in your foot after your operation and does not settle down. If this happens you would need to be referred to a pain specialist.

This information will be discussed with you in detail at your pre-assessment appointment before your operation and you will be given the chance to ask any questions.

Contact numbers

If you need advice or have any problems, please contact the Podiatric Surgery Team.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Podiatric Surgery Team
One Life Hartlepool
Park Road
Hartlepool
TS24 7PW
Central booking line: 01429 522471
Monday-Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm

Further information is available from:

The Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists
1 Fellmonger's Path
Tower Bridge Road
London
SE1 3LY
Telephone: 020 7234 8620
or via the website at www.feetforlife.org

NHS Choices

Telephone: 111 (when it is less urgent than 999)
Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones
or via the website at www.nhs.uk

Reference

1. Kilmartin TE (2006). Critical Review: The Surgical Management of Hallux Valgus. *British Journal of Podiatry*, Vol 9, no.1, pages 4-24.

Have Your Say

Your feedback is important to us as it can help us to develop and improve our services for patients and other service users.

You can rate your experience by telling us:

“How likely are you to recommend our service to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?”

You can either fill in a paper form and return it to the boxes provided in each department or you can fill the short survey in online at:

<http://www.nth.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/complaints/friends-family/>



For more information on the Friends and Family Test, please visit - www.nth.nhs.uk/friendsandfamily/

This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we're doing well or if there's anything which we can improve, that's why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

telephone: 01642 624719

Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 4.00pm

Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

freephone: 0800 092 0084

Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

telephone: 01642 617617

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30pm – 4.30pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk

University Hospital of North Tees, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees. TS19 8PE

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