

# 1st MTP Joint Cheilectomy

## INTRODUCTION

The joint at the base of the big toe (1st metatarsophalangeal joint) is commonly affected by arthritis (*hallux rigidus* or *limitus*). In the early stages, bone spurs form on the top of the joint which can cause pain and stiffness. The word *cheilectomy* comes from the Greek word *Cheilos*, meaning 'lip', and this procedure involves removing the abnormal bone from the joint. This operation is effective at relieving pain and impingement from bone spurs in early arthritis, and can delay the need for more invasive operations like joint fusion.

## THE SURGERY

1st MTP joint cheilectomy surgery involves a number of steps:

- General anaesthetic and IV antibiotics
- Tourniquet around the thigh
- Incision along the top of the big toe
- Protection of the big toe extensor tendon (EHL)
- Removal of abnormal bone spurs and clean-up of the joint
- Check x-ray
- Closure of incision with sutures
- Local anaesthetic block
- Surgical shoe

## GUIDELINES FOR POST-OP RECOVERY

### HOSPITAL ADMISSION

- Discharge home on the day of surgery

### FIRST 2 WEEKS

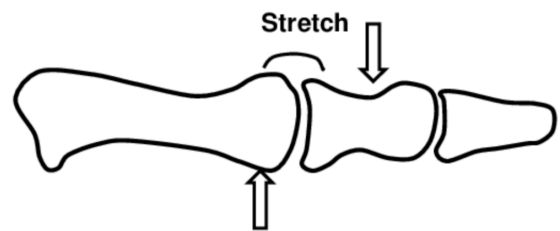
- Elevate foot and rest
- Full weightbearing as tolerated in surgical shoe
- Surgical shoe on at all times (including in bed and shower)
- Crutches for balance only as required
- Dressings to stay dry and intact
- Strong painkillers as required
- Vitamin C 1g per day

### 2 WEEK POST-OP APPOINTMENT

- Review by Dr Zilko and nurse for removal of dressings and sutures

### FROM 2 WEEKS

- Transition to normal stiff-soled supportive shoes
- Shoes on for any weightbearing (avoid bare feet)
- Elevate foot when not walking
- Daily scar massage from 3 weeks post-op
- *Exercise 1*: Using both your hands put some pressure where the arrows indicate. It is easiest to do this with your foot crossed over the other knee. Each exercise: Push & hold for 10 seconds. Do sets of 10, 2 x per day



- *Exercise 2*: Scrunch toes on an "imaginary" towel & hold for 10 seconds. Do a set of 10, 2 x per day
- Podiatry review (arrange first appointment for 2-5 days after the 2-week post-op check)
- **PODIATRY REHAB:**
  - Paraffin therapy, joint mobilisation, cold laser, soft tissue manipulation and nerve desensitisation
  - Foot intrinsic muscle exercises

### FROM 6 WEEKS

- Continue range of movement and podiatry exercises
- Avoid impact exercises until 10-12 weeks post-op

Full recovery from the surgery is generally 3-6 months. Arthritis is a degenerative process and gets worse with time, and you may require further surgery in the future.

*Every patient's recovery is individual and depends on the severity of the disease and complexity of the surgery.*