

# 1st Metatarsophalangeal Joint Fusion

## INTRODUCTION

The joint at the base of the big toe (1st metatarsophalangeal joint) is commonly affected by arthritis. Fusion of the joint is the most reliable way of relieving pain and improving function. After a big toe fusion most patients have little or no pain and are able to live very active lives.

## THE SURGERY

1st MTPJ fusion surgery involves a number of steps:

- General anaesthetic and IV antibiotics
- Tourniquet around the thigh
- Incision along the inside of the big toe
- Removal of remaining joint cartilage
- Insertion of bone graft
- Internal fixation with plate and screws
- Check x-ray
- Closure of incision with sutures
- Local anaesthetic block
- Surgical shoe

## GUIDELINES FOR POST-OP RECOVERY

### HOSPITAL ADMISSION

- Most patients go home on the day of surgery

### FIRST 2 WEEKS

- Elevate foot and rest
- Full weightbearing as tolerated in surgical shoe (put weight through heel, not through toes)
- Surgical shoe on at all times (including in bed and shower)
- Crutches for balance if required
- Dressings to stay completely dry and intact
- Strong painkillers as required
- Aspirin 100mg once a day
- Antibiotics if prescribed

### 2 WEEK POST-OP APPOINTMENT

- Review by nurse and removal of dressings and sutures

### WEEKS 3-6

- Full weightbearing as tolerated in surgical shoe (put weight through heel, not through toes)
- Surgical shoe on at all times, including in bed, except when showering (seated)
- Elevate foot when not walking
- Daily scar massage from 3 weeks post-op

### 6 WEEK POST-OP APPOINTMENT

- X-ray to check fusion and review by Dr Zilko

### FROM 6 WEEKS

- Transition to normal stiff-soled supportive shoes
- Avoid barefoot walking
- Heel under 3cm

### 3 MONTH POST-OP APPOINTMENT

- X-ray to check fusion and review by Dr Zilko

### FROM 3 MONTHS

- Return to normal activities as tolerated

Full recovery is usually 3-6 months, and can take up to 12 months.

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