

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Tarsometatarsal joint fusion



Why do I need a fusion?

- Arthritis
- Deformity.

What does the operation involve?

The joint surfaces will be removed via a cut on the top of your foot. The joint will be held together by a plate and screws or a staple. Bone graft may be taken from your lower leg just below your knee joint on the same side to encourage healing. Artificial bone graft may also be used in isolation or in combination with your own bone to enhance fusion. Artificial bone graft comes from a dead piece of human bone which is thoroughly tested. Sometimes more than one joint is fused.

You will have either a general or spinal anaesthetic.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

- Pain killers (analgesia)
- Modify activities

- Custom made insoles
- Modified shoes
- Steroid injection.

These measures may only be temporary.

How long will I be in hospital?

You will be discharged when it is safe to do so. Some patients go home the same day but most others stay one or two nights.

Please wash your feet thoroughly on the day you are admitted to hospital to reduce your risk of infection.

Post-operative care

You will be non-weight bearing using crutches. Please ask for a leaflet about wheelchair hire if you think this will be useful.

You may find stairs difficult whilst you are non-weight bearing and may need to arrange some support at home.

Keep your foot up when you are sat down and only walk about when necessary for the first two weeks.

You need to wriggle your toes every hour and do some deep breathing exercises to reduce your risk of blood clots. It helps to drink plenty of clear fluids.

You may be given injections or tablets to reduce your risk of blood clots and you may be given a stocking to wear on your other leg.

Please remember to keep moving your knee so that it doesn't become stiff.

How long do I need off work?

You may need up to three months off work after this operation. You may be able to go back to work earlier if you have a desk job and you are able to elevate your foot.

When can I drive?

Unless you have left foot surgery and have an automatic car you will not be allowed to drive for three months, until your cast or boot is removed.

When can I play sport?

You will not be able to do any sport for a minimum of three months after your operation, but you may not be able to return to badminton or squash. You are allowed to swim from three months post-surgery.

When will I be seen in clinic?

You will be seen two weeks after your operation to check your wound/s and remove your stitches. A further plaster cast will be applied, possibly a lightweight one. You may be seen by one of our nurse specialists for this appointment.

Six weeks after your operation you will be seen again with your plaster off and an x-ray on arrival. If all looks well at this stage you may be able to start putting weight through your foot in a further cast or boot.

A further x-ray will be taken three months after surgery and hopefully you will be able to start walking again without any plaster or other support. The ankle may feel a bit stiff and there will still be some swelling.

What are the risks and complications of this operation?

- Swelling
- Pain
- Infection
- Not healing, also known as non-union (10-15%)
- Malposition

- CRPS (chronic regional pain syndrome – more information available at the NHS Choices website)
- DVT (deep vein thrombosis)
- Sometimes there is a need for further surgery to remove metal work or for non-union.

Smoking increases the risk of the bones NOT fusing by 16 times. If the bones do not heal fully you may need another operation with further bone grafting.

Please try to stop smoking before your surgery. If you need help with this, you can be referred to Smoke Free Life for smoking cessation advice.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

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