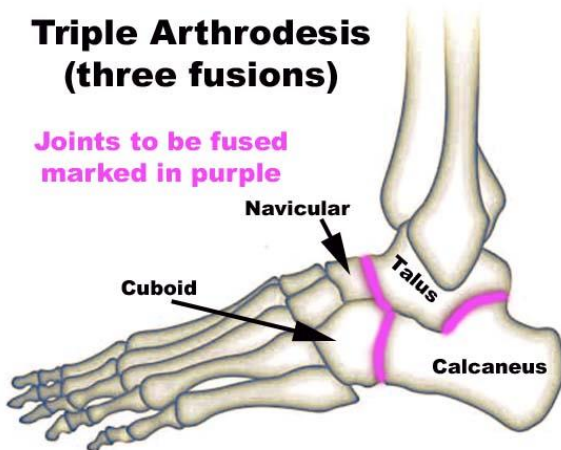


INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Triple fusion (foot)

Triple Arthrodesis (three fusions)

Joints to be fused
marked in purple



What is a triple fusion?

This is an operation to fuse or stiffen three joints in your foot – subtalar joint, talonavicular joint and calcaneocuboid joint. These joints allow most of the side to side movement in your foot. This operation is suggested when there is arthritis or severe deformity in your hind foot.



Are there any alternatives to surgery?

- Pain killers (analgesia) and/or anti-inflammatory tablets.
- Injections.
- Restricted activity.
- Insoles.

- Adjusted footwear especially boots that lace above the ankle.
- Walking aids such as a stick or crutches.

These measures may only be temporary.

What does the operation involve?

There will be two cuts, one on each side of your foot. The joint surfaces are removed, and the bones held together with plates and screws or staples. You will be given a general or spinal anaesthetic.

Bone graft may be taken from your lower leg just below the knee joint on the same side. 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.

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

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.

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 the stairs difficult whilst you are non-weight bearing. You may need to arrange some support at home. Keep your foot up when you are sat down. Only walk when necessary for the first two weeks. Wriggle your toes each hour and do some deep breathing exercises.

You may need injections or tablets to reduce your risk of blood clots, and you may be given a stocking to wear on your other leg. It is important to drink plenty of clear fluids, tea or coffee. Please remember to keep moving your knee so that it doesn't become stiff.

Risks and complications:

- Swelling – this is very noticeable when three joints are fused.
- Infection.
- Numbness or tingling.
- Not healing, known as non-union (10%).
- DVT (deep vein thrombosis).
- Anaesthetic risks will be discussed with you before your surgery.
- Sometimes there is a need for further surgery to remove metal work or for non-union.

Smoking dramatically increases the risk of the bones not fusing together (non-union) and slows down wound healing. 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. The wound on the outer side of your foot may be slower to heal as the blood supply is not as good to this area. If the bones do not heal fully you may need another operation with further bone grafting.

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. You will be given a boot to wear.

A further x-ray will be taken three months after surgery and hopefully you will be able to start walking again in the boot. The ankle will feel a bit stiff and there will still be some swelling present.

It will take a long time for this swelling to go down and it may not all disappear.

When can I drive?

Unless you have surgery on your left foot, and you drive an automatic car, you will not be insured to drive until you are out of plaster or your boot.

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.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202503-05-TFF
Created: May 2017 / Revised: March 2023 / Review Date: March 2025