

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Talonavicular joint fusion



What is a talonavicular joint fusion?

This is an operation to fuse two bones together in your foot. An operation may be suggested when you have arthritis.

You are likely to have already had an injection into this joint to confirm that it is the source of your pain.

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 an incision (cut) on the top of your foot.

The joint surfaces are removed, and the bones held together with screws or staples. You will be given a general or spinal anaesthetic.

A bone graft may be taken from your lower leg just below the knee joint on the same side. This is done to encourage the bones to heal together.

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. Your lower leg will be put into a plaster cast after your operation.

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 on your operated leg, using crutches for a minimum of six weeks. 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. You may need to arrange some support at home.

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

Wriggle your toes each hour and do some deep breathing exercises.

You may need injections 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 it doesn't become stiff.

Risks and complications:

- Swelling.
- Infection.
- Numbness or tingling.
- Bones not fusing together (non union) is common after this operation.
- DVT (deep vein thrombosis).
- 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 by 16 times and it slows down wound healing. If the joint does not fuse 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.

When will I be seen in clinic?

You will be seen two weeks after your operation to check your wounds and remove your stitches. A further plaster cast will be applied, possibly a lightweight one. You will still be non-weight bearing. You may be seen by one of our nurse specialists at this appointment.

Six weeks after your operation you will be seen again with the plaster off and an x-ray on arrival. A further plaster cast or boot will be applied. You may be able to start putting weight through your foot. A further x-ray will be taken three months after surgery and hopefully you will be able to stop wearing your 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.

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