

## *Orthopaedic Connection*

### **A Bunion, A Tailor's Bunion,???**

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.  
Orthopaedic Surgeon

#### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

A bunion, as everyone knows, affects the big toe and is a prominent bulge on the inner side of the joint. I am often asked what the difference is between the two.

A tailor's bunion, also called bunionette, is present on the little toe side of the foot.

Both types are a protrusion at the joint where the long foot bones (metatarsals) meet the small bones of the toes.

In the case of a tailor's bunion the protrusion is caused by bone and tissue that moves out of place forcing the little toe to bend toward the three middle toes of the foot.

#### **The Results**

- Redness
- Swelling or puffy
- Very tender bump
- Difficulty walking
- Hard to find shoes that are comfortable

#### **Comes Over Years**

A tailor's bunion, like a regular bunion comes on over years from abnormal pressure and motion applied to the bony prominence of the fifth metatarsal.

#### **Who Was Tailor?**

Well, it's referring to an occupation not a person. Apparently tailors often sat with legs crossed while working. This led to pressure on the little toe joint outer aspect.

It has been named this "forever" and no one knows who began calling it this. There are many things named like this in medicine which I find curious.

Maybe they didn't wear shoes or maybe they wore flip flops!! But, I digress.

Modern real causes are inherited foot types, the shoes you wear and perhaps how you walk.

#### **Shoes**

Maybe flip flops are better after all! Shoes that are too narrow, too small or have a heel higher than 2 ¼ inches are common aggravators of bunions.

When shoes are too small, there is not enough room for the natural spread of the toes. And elevated heels focus pressure on the toes.

#### **Treatment**

Both types can be managed by never forcing your foot into a shoe that doesn't fit properly. Shoes must have adequate width and depth for the toes.

- Creative padding to protect and cushion the bunion or bunionette can help a lot.
- Advil or similar can help with pain and inflammation.
- Don't apply ice if you have diabetes or poor circulation.

## **Surgery**

Surgery can be very helpful for both types of bunions if walking is too painful and other means have not helped.

*My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.*

## **Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website**

I hope what you have read has raised questions. No problem!

Please log onto [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). It has a huge amount of musculoskeletal information in the Website and the Archive of all previous GCH articles.

Check it out and be amazed what you can learn.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush