



**Dorset
Clinical Commissioning Group**

NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group

Surgical Management of Bunions

Criteria Based Access Protocol



Supporting people in Dorset to lead healthier lives

POLICY TRAIL AND VERSION CONTROL SHEET:

Protocol Reference: 92 Version : 3.0

Document Status: Current			
Developed by: Review, Design and Delivery			
Policy Number:		92	
Date of Policy:		June 2014	
Next Review Date:		June 2017	
Name of Originator/Author:			
Sponsor:			
Approving Committee or Group:		MSK CCP	
Date Approved:		June 2014	
Version	Date	Comments	By Whom
1.0	January 2011		
2.0	March 2012	Explicit conservative management. Defined significant functional impairment	
3.0	June 2014	No changes required at review date.	

Target Audience	All staff and Members within NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning and relevant referring and receiving clinicians.	
Distribution		
Intranet	Clinical Commissioning Group Website	Email to Staff
✓	✓	✓

NHS DORSET CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

SURGICAL MANAGEMENT OF BUNIONS

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SURGICAL MANAGEMENT OF BUNIONS

1. Background to the condition and treatment

- 1.1 A bunion is a bony swelling at the base of the big toe caused by the big toe joint moving out of alignment. The aim of surgery is to realign the joint and to remove of the bony prominence. Where surgery is recommended, patients should be aware that there can be a risk of complications and while the majority of people obtain a good result, a small minority may still have problems with the foot.
- 1.2 Not all people with bunions are symptomatic and concerns about the cosmetic appearance of feet should be managed in primary care and do not need a referral to secondary care.
- 1.3 The surgical treatment of asymptomatic bunions is regarded as a procedure of low clinical priority. These procedures are therefore not routinely funded by NHS Dorset CCG.
- 1.4 Requests for surgical correction of bunions will only be considered where all conservative methods of management and appropriate lifestyle changes have been exhausted and the patient suffers pain and deformity that impairs functionality.

2. Access Criteria

- 2.1 Requests for the removal of symptomatic bunions will ONLY be considered where: Conservative methods of management have failed. Conservative management techniques include:
 - Avoiding high heel shoes and wearing wide fitting leather shoes which stretch
 - Exercises specifically designed to alleviate the effects of a bunion and keep it flexible
 - Applying ice and elevating painful and swollen bunions
 - Non-surgical treatments such as bunion pads, splints, insoles or shields

And

The patient suffers from either:

- Severe deformity (overriding toes) that cause significant functional impairment

Or

- Severe pain that causes significant functional impairment

Significant functional impairment is defined by NHS Dorset CCG as:

- Symptoms prevent the patient fulfilling vital work or educational responsibilities
- Symptoms prevent the patient carrying out vital domestic or carer activities
- Symptoms prevent the patient carrying out vital recreational physical activities

3. Cases for Individual Consideration

- 3.1 Should a patient not meet the protocol criteria, the Policy for Individual Patient Treatment (which is available on the NHS Dorset CCG website or upon request), recognises that there will be occasions when patients who are not considered for funding may have good clinical reasons for being treated as exceptions. In such cases the requesting clinician must provide further information to support the case for being considered as an exception.
- 3.2 The fact that treatment is likely to be effective for a patient is not, itself a basis for exceptional circumstances. In order for funding to be agreed there must be some unusual or unique clinical factor in respect of the patient that suggests that they are:
- Significantly different to the general population of patients with the particular condition; and
 - They are likely to gain significantly more benefit from the intervention than might be expected for the average patient with the condition.