

Policy Category:

CBA&PA

Who usually applies for funding?

GP



Gloucestershire  
Clinical Commissioning Group

## Removal of bunions/lesser toe deformity

### Commissioning decision

The CCG will provide funding for removal of bunions for patients who meet the criteria defined within this policy. Funding approval for eligible patients must be sought from the CCG via the Prior Approval process prior to treatment.

### Policy Statement:

Requests for the removal of symptomatic bunions will ONLY be considered where::

- The patient has seen a Podiatrist and all appropriate conservative approaches have been applied but the patient continues to experience significant functional impairment  
**OR**
- **Severe** deformity that causes significant functional impairment (e.g. unable to source any comfortable footwear, hallux significantly deforming lesser toes)  
**OR**
- **Severe** pain that causes significant functional impairment (e.g. VAS 7+, unable to carry out work or activities of daily living)  
**OR**
- Significant concern over bone infection

In mild to moderate cases or in severe cases where surgery is not wanted by the patient refer to podiatry.

*Note: Significant functional impairment is defined by the CCG as:*

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

### Rationale:

The term bunion refers to any enlargement or deformity of the 1st MTP joint, including enlarged bursae, overlying ganglion, gouty arthropathy, and hallux valgus, as well as bony masses that can develop secondary arthritis. They often also cause marked lesser toe deformities.

A considerable number of people do not suffer any symptoms from their bunion and if surgery is undertaken, patients should be aware of the potential complications which include, pain, stiffness, infection, swelling, non-union recurrence and DVT/PE.

Given this it is appropriate to ensure that patients are experiencing significant symptoms as a result of their bunions, and to ensure that more conservative measures have been attempted prior to considering surgical intervention.

### Plain English Summary:

A bunion is a bony deformity of the joint at the base of the big toe. The main sign of a bunion is the big toe pointing towards the other toes on the same foot, which may force the foot bone attached to it (the first metatarsal) to stick outwards.

Other symptoms may include:

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- a swollen, bony bump on the outside edge of your foot
- pain and swelling over your big toe joint that's made worse by pressure from wearing shoes
- hard, callused and red skin caused by your big toe and second toe overlapping
- sore skin over the top of the bunion
- changes to the shape of your foot, making it difficult to find shoes that fit

Anyone can develop a bunion, but they're more common in women than men. This may be because of the style of footwear that women wear.

There are a number of treatment options for bunions. Non-surgical treatments should be tried first, including painkillers, orthotics (insoles) and bunion pads.

There are risks and complications associated with surgery and it is possible that you may swap a deformed but painless foot for a painful but more aesthetically pleasing foot as a result of surgery. Therefore, surgery will usually only be funded if your bunions are causing considerable pain and non-surgical treatments have been unsuccessful.

If your doctor believes that you meet the criteria set out in this policy they can submit a Prior Approval application to the CCG in order to seek funding approval for your surgery. The CCG will review your case and if we agree that the criteria have been met we will authorise funding.

**Evidence base:**

Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust – Patient guide to bunions and lesser toe deformities, August 2011.

Application form – Prior Approval Form

For further information please contact [GLCCG.IFR@nhs.net](mailto:GLCCG.IFR@nhs.net)

<b>Date of publication</b>	
<b>Policy review date</b>	

**Consultation**

<b>Consultee (delete as applicable)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Clinical Programme Group	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
GHNHSFT (via CPG)	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
GP Membership (via What's New This Week)	July/August 2015
Has the consultation included patient representatives?	Yes

**Policy sign off**

<b>Reviewing Body</b>	<b>Date of review</b>
Effective Clinical Commissioning Policy Group	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2016