
Removal of Bunions

Commissioning Policy

<p>Policy: Commissioned but criteria apply</p>

Policy Statement

A bunion is a bony swelling at the base of the big toe. Not all people with bunions are symptomatic and where surgery is recommended, patients should be aware that there is a significant risk of complications such as corns or calluses.

The removal of asymptomatic bunions is regarded as a low clinical priority. These procedures are therefore not routinely funded by the PCT.

Criteria to Access Treatment

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 causes significant functional impairment

OR

Severe pain that causes significant functional impairment.

Significant functional impairment is defined by NHS Plymouth 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 recreational physical activities.

Concerns about the cosmetic appearance of feet should be managed in primary care and must not be referred onto secondary care.

Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this policy may be considered on an individual basis where their GP or consultant believes exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the rule of this policy.

Individual cases will be reviewed at the PCT Exceptional Treatment Panel upon receipt of a completed application form from the patient's GP, Consultant or Clinician. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

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