



**For Immediate Release**

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## **BUNIONS: A COMMON FOOT DEFORMITY** ***MPMA Shares Treatment Options***

**Lansing, Mich.** – It is estimated that bunions occur in 30 percent of the population in Western countries. However, there are misconceptions about this common foot deformity leaving many people unnecessarily suffering the pain of bunions for years before seeking treatment. The podiatrists of the Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) can explain the changes to the foot and develop successful treatment plans.

A bunion is often described as a bump on the side of the big toe. But a bunion is more than that. The visible bump actually reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot. The big toe leans toward the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead. This throws the bones out of alignment – producing the bunion’s “bump.”

Bunions cause discomfort and pain from the constant irritation, rubbing, and friction of the enlargement against shoes. Over time, bursitis or arthritis may set in, the skin on the bottom of the foot may become thicker, and everyday walking may become difficult—all contributing to chronic pain.

“Because bunions are progressive, they don’t go away, and will usually get worse over time,” said Dr. Jodie Sengstock, MPMA director of professional development. “Not all cases are alike – some bunions progress more rapidly than others. It is best to have an MPMA podiatrist evaluate the specific situation and develop the best treatment plan for an individual.”

Bunions are a symptom of faulty foot development and are usually caused by the way we walk and our inherited foot type or our shoes. Causes of bunions include:

- Wearing shoes that are too tight
- Foot injuries
- Neuromuscular disorders
- Congenital deformities
- Flat feet or low arches
- Arthritic patients
- Inflammatory joint disease.
- Occupations that place undue stress on the feet are also a factor.

### **Treatment for Bunions**

The goal for bunion treatment is twofold: first, to relieve the pressure and pain caused by irritations, and second to stop any progressive growth of the enlargement. Commonly used methods for reducing pressure and pain caused by bunions include:

- Protective padding, often made from felt material, to eliminate the friction against shoes and help alleviate inflammation and skin problems
- Removal of corns and calluses on the foot
- Changing to carefully fitted footwear designed to accommodate the bunion and not contribute toward its growth
- Orthotic devices—both over-the-counter and custom made—to help stabilize the joint and place the foot in the correct position for walking and standing
- Exercises to maintain joint mobility and prevent stiffness or arthritis
- Splints for nighttime wear to help the toes and joint align properly. This is often recommended for adolescents with bunions, because their bone development may still be adaptable

Depending on the size of the enlargement, misalignment of the toe, and pain experienced, conservative treatments may not be adequate to prevent progressive damage from bunions. In these cases a variety of surgical procedures are considered. The procedures are designed to remove the “bump” of bone, correct the changes in the bony structure of the foot, and correct soft tissue changes that may also have occurred.

In short, bunions are a common, painful, deformity that can be successfully treated.

For more foot health information and to find a local podiatrist, visit: [MPMA.org](http://MPMA.org).

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#### **About the MPMA:**

The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) has been dedicated to serving and protecting the public's podiatric health and maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct among its members for over 100 years. The four main objectives of the organization are: to improve the quality of foot care; to promote the importance of foot health among the general public and health care professionals throughout the state; to increase awareness of the art and science of podiatric medicine and surgery; and to provide continuing medical education to podiatrists. [www.mpma.org](http://www.mpma.org)

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