

Removal of fixation devices

To reduce irritation



Information for patients

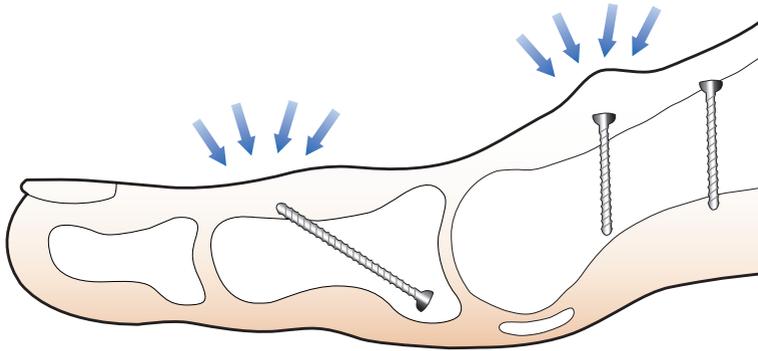
Department of Podiatric Surgery



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What are the treatment options?

Non-surgical options

In some cases patients may choose not to have the fixation device removed and live with the irritation it causes.

Surgical options

Severe irritation can only be corrected using surgery. This is usually recommended if the internal fixation devices have become loose or prominent.

What are the benefits of surgery?

- Removal of loose or prominent internal fixation devices
- Improved comfort

Are there any risks?

The general risks of foot surgery are outlined in the pre-operative information booklet which you will have already received. In addition to this there are the following specific risks for this procedure:

- Scar irritation
- Failure to retrieve all of the fixation devices
- Fracture of fixation devices

How long will the operation take?

The operation usually takes between 30 and 45 minutes.

Is this a day procedure?

Yes, you can usually go home the same day (you will usually be admitted for half a day).

Will I have a plaster cast?

This is not normally necessary.

Will I have any screws or pins left in my foot?

Internal fixation (bone screws or pins) are not required for this procedure unless replacement fixation becomes necessary.

How long will I need off work?

This will depend on the job you do and the speed of your recovery, but usually 1 - 2 weeks.

Who can I speak to if I would like more information about the procedure?

It is important that you understand what the procedure involves before giving consent. This includes any potential risks, benefits and alternatives. Although these will be explained to you beforehand please don't hesitate to ask either your consultant or one of the team if you have any further questions.

What does the operation involve?

After your foot is numb, you will be taken through to theatre. There will be drapes up so that you cannot see. An incision will be made (usually using the same incision that was made by your original surgery). The fixation will be found and removed and the wound will be stitched. We typically use tough stitches that will be strong enough for you to be slightly more active immediately after the operation.

Removal of internal fixation devices

The day of the operation

The operation is usually performed under a local anaesthetic. This means that you will be awake during the procedure and can eat normally and take your normally prescribed medications on the day of the operation.

The local anaesthetic is administered via injections around the area of the fixation and the ankle. Most patients find this to be more comfortable than a dental injection. Sometimes an injection behind the knee will be offered.

The operation takes about an hour, although you can expect to be in the day surgery unit for about 3 hours. This is to allow you an opportunity to rest after the operation and for us to provide you with discharge information and packs as required.

For your safety you must have a competent adult at home for the first day and night after surgery.

First 2 - 4 days

- This is the worst time for pain but you will be given painkillers to help.
- You must rest completely for 2 - 4 days with your foot elevated just above hip level. You may be advised to keep the circulation going by gently drawing circles in the air or wiggling your toes.
- You should restrict your walking to going to the bathroom only. If you have been given crutches you must use them in the way shown.
- You may be able to bear a little weight on the foot carefully using just the heel. You should be able to get about a little more after 3 - 4 days.

One week after surgery

- You may need to attend for your foot to be checked and re-dressed.
- You may start to do a little more within pain limits. Pain may mean you are doing too much.

Two weeks after surgery

- You must attend clinic again for removal of stitches. For absorbable stitches this normally means just trimming the ends.
- You should no longer need the bandage and you should be able to get around without crutches.
- Your foot will still be quite swollen but you should be able to get a roomy shoe on. You should bring a lace-up broad fitting and supportive shoe (ideally a trainer) with you.
- Provided that the wound is well enough healed you should be able to get the foot wet.
- You will be advised on a gradual return to activity and may also be advised on scar care.
- You may be able to return to work but may need longer if you have an active job. If in any doubt please discuss this with a member of the team.
- You may return to driving if you can perform an emergency stop. You must check with your insurance company before driving again.
- Whilst you may resume normal activity, you should avoid sport.

Between 2 - 6 weeks after surgery

- The foot starts to return to normal and you can return to shoes.
- The foot will still be quite swollen especially at the end of the day.

Between 8 - 12 weeks after surgery

- The foot should continue to improve and begin to feel more normal again. There will be less swelling.
- Sport can be considered depending on your recovery.

Six months after surgery

- You will have a final review between 3 - 6 months following surgery.
- The swelling should now be slight and you should be getting the benefit of surgery.

Twelve months after surgery

- The foot has stopped improving with all healing complete.

Please note: if a complication arises, recovery may be delayed.

Who do I contact if I would like any further information?

If you have any questions about the procedure or would like further information please call us on:

- **0114 271 4668**



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