

Claw Toe Correction

What is the problem?

Toes can become misaligned for several reasons. In most cases, toe deformities are caused by an imbalance between the muscles and tendons that control the small joints of the toes.

This imbalance can cause one or more joints to become bent or **flexed**, resulting in pressure and painful callosities (hard areas of thickened skin).

Claw toe correction surgery aims to improve the alignment of the toe, relieve pressure and pain, and improve function.

What's involved?

Claw toe correction surgery may involve several procedures, depending on the type and severity of the deformity.

These may include:

- Lengthening the tendons on the top and/or bottom of the toe
- Releasing and stabilising the joint at the base of the toe (metatarsophalangeal joint)
- Fusing (stiffening) one or more of the small joints of the toe (interphalangeal joints)
- Holding the toe in the corrected position with a wire, which generally remains in the toe for approximately **6 weeks**

What are the possible risks?

All surgical procedures carry some risk. Fortunately, the risk of complications following corrective toe surgery is low.

Possible complications include:

- Infection
- Problems with wound healing
- Nerve injury causing numbness, tingling or pins and needles
- Non-union — the joints do not successfully fuse
- Residual malalignment or recurrent deformity
- Ongoing pain
- Injury to the blood vessels supplying the toe
- Movement of the wires either out of or into the toe
- Toe ischemia leading to amputation

What can I expect after surgery?

Rest and elevation

You will have a post-surgical shoe on your foot following surgery.

- Keep your foot elevated as much as possible, particularly during the first 72 hours.
- Keep your dressings dry and intact until your postoperative appointment.
- Mobilise for short distances as pain allows.
- For the first few weeks, aim to remain mainly at home and limit prolonged periods of standing or walking.
- You may bear weight as tolerated while wearing the post-surgical shoe, unless you have been given different instructions by your surgeon.

Pain Management

Pain relief may be required for approximately 4 weeks, depending on your individual circumstances and other medications. This may include:

- Regular paracetamol.
- Anti-inflammatory medication, where appropriate.
- Breakthrough opioid-type medication, if required.

Driving

Your ability to drive safely will depend on which foot has been operated on, your mobility, footwear and your ability to safely control the vehicle.

- Right foot or both feet: you should not drive for a minimum of 6 weeks.
- Left foot: if you drive an automatic vehicle, driving may be possible, but Dr Phegan recommends waiting a minimum of 2 weeks before attempting to drive.
- Driving while wearing a cast or boot may be hazardous.

You should be able to safely control the vehicle and perform an emergency stop before returning to driving. Check with your insurer if required.

Follow up

Keep all dressings clean, dry and intact for the first 2 weeks, until your first post operative appointment with Dr Phegan and his in-house therapists.

At your first post operative you will usually have:

- Wound review
- Removal of stitches/sutures - occasionally, sutures may need to remain in place for longer.
- Assessment of your recovery

Your first postoperative appointment will be arranged by Dr Phegan's rooms. A confirmation SMS will be sent with the date and time.

Typical recovery milestones

Time after surgery	Expected milestones
2 weeks	Wound review and removal of sutures, commence rehabilitation.
2-6 weeks	Regular physiotherapy to increase range and weight bearing
6 weeks	Removal of toe pins in clinic setting. Ensure you have taken some pain relief at least 20 minutes prior to your appointment.
6 weeks - 3 months	Work on swelling reduction, scar massage and mobility.
6 months	Full recovery is expected for most patients

These timeframes are a guide only. Every patient's recovery is individual and depends on the severity of the injury and the complexity of the surgery.

When should I seek help?

If you have concerns about your recovery, please contact your treating team.

During office hours

Dr Phegan's office

Phone: **(07) 5671 1120**

Email: info@drphegan.com

After hours

Please contact the hospital where your surgery was performed or attend your local GP or emergency department.

If you experience a medical emergency, seek urgent medical attention or call 000.

Important information

This information sheet provides general information about your surgery. Your individual treatment and recovery may differ.

Please follow the specific instructions provided by Dr Phegan and your treating medical team, particularly regarding weight-bearing, medications, wound care, follow-up and driving.

If you are unsure about any aspect of your recovery, please contact the practice for advice.