

Foot Notes

Bunion Surgery Relieves Pain, Helps Increase Activity

(NAPSA)—There's good news for anyone considering bunion surgery. A survey found more than 90 percent of patients who had the procedure say they experienced significant pain relief, increased their physical activity and would recommend it to others.

The patients surveyed by the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) had surgery performed by a podiatric foot and ankle surgeon to correct bunions within the past six to 24 months.

"Sometimes, those who can benefit from the surgery avoid it and continue to endure pain because they have heard that surgery doesn't work and is excessively painful," said Kimberly Eickmeier, DPM, FACFAS, a podiatric foot and ankle surgeon with Christie Clinic in Champaign, Ill. "The truth is that advanced surgical techniques have allowed us to effectively correct bunion deformities with excellent outcomes in terms of pain relief and improved quality of life."

Ninety-six percent of the survey respondents identified pain relief as a desired outcome of the surgery, and 86 percent also said they hoped to improve their walking and increase their physical activity following surgery. Ninety-two percent said they were able to increase their physical activity and 90 percent said they would recommend bunion surgery to others.

A bunion is the result of undue stress on the big toe joint, which causes a protuberance of bone or tissue around that joint. Bunions can be very painful, inhibit normal walking and make it difficult to fit into some shoes.

Contrary to popular belief, bunions are aggravated, not



High-heeled shoes do not cause bunions, but do contribute to the pain and discomfort.

caused, by tight shoes. Bunions usually are due to inherited faulty foot mechanics which put abnormal pressure on the front of the foot; pain is the primary reason patients seek medical attention. A majority of bunion surgeries are performed on women because they wear tight-fitting, high-heeled shoes that worsen the underlying problem and cause abnormal stress to the joint.

One survey respondent, Joann Morini of Windemere, Fla., returned to an active schedule as a club tennis player after surgery to correct severe bunions on both feet. "The pain was so bad I couldn't walk normally or wear decent-looking shoes," she said. "After surgery, I couldn't believe the improvement. The pain was gone and I was able to play tennis again. Looking back, I regret waiting so long."

A complimentary brochure, "Bunion Deformities and Treatment" is available by calling the 888-THE-FEET, or on the Web at www.acfas.org.