Podiatric Surgery with Independent Health Group

Please read this information leaflet carefully

The information within this leaflet is what we think might be important for you to know, however, what is important for one patient will be different to another and you will also probably want to know how the information here relates to you as an individual. Please ask as many questions as you need. We are here to help.

Why have I been referred to the Podiatric Surgery Service?

Your GP, Nurse Practitioner, or Primary Care practitioner has identified that you have a foot problem which needs specialist care. This may be due to pain, deformity or functional problems. You have been referred to the Podiatric Surgery service for review of your problem, diagnosis and a treatment plan. You have the choice to use other providers of this service if you prefer.

What is a Consultant Podiatric Surgeon?

Podiatric Surgery is a specialist field of practice within the podiatry profession. Consultant Podiatric Surgeons are podiatrists who have had extensive postgraduate training in the surgical management of foot and ankle problems. Our Consultant Podiatric Surgeons have academic qualifications of Bachelor of Science (BSc), Masters in Science (MSc) and Fellowship of the College of Podiatric Surgeons (FCPodS). Consultant Podiatric Surgeons are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and registration can be checked via the HCPC website.

Podiatric Surgeons are independent clinicians in the field of foot surgery **and are not medical doctors**. They are to feet very much like dentists are to teeth. They have undertaken formal education in foot health and medical sciences and are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of general medical conditions within the lower limb e.g. diabetes.

Podiatric surgery is a proven and effective part of foot health care, with thousands of foot operations undertaken in the UK by Podiatric Surgeons every year. Information is collected for audit purposes in order to review performance, show evidence of practice and assess patient outcomes and experiences. Ask your consultant about the national audit database PASCOM-10. We will send you a questionnaire to complete six months after your surgery which gives you the opportunity to feedback your experience. For further information see The College of Podiatry website at https://cop.org.uk/foot-health/what-is-podiatry/what-is-podiatric-surgery/.

What happens at your first appointment?

You will be sent an appointment letter by post which contains your appointment time and a map of where to go. Please wear shoes and socks which are easy to remove, and loose clothing as your Consultant may need to examine your legs from the knee down.

Your Consultant and any other member of staff present will welcome you and introduce themselves.

It is very important we know how your foot symptoms are affecting you. At the start of any consultation it is really helpful if we hear your thoughts about the problems you are experiencing, what your concerns are, any expectations you have about possible treatments and most importantly what it is you really want from any treatment, for example relief of pain or being able to complete normal daily tasks without discomfort and enabling the comfortable fitting of footwear. We can then tailor any treatment to your needs.

So, firstly we will listen and then spend some time asking any further questions necessary to understand your problems as best as we can. We will then want to know about your general health so it is very helpful if you have completed the Health Questionnaire which you will have received, please bring this completed form to your appointment. We will also want to know some information about you, including your home and work circumstances.

Following this your Consultant will want to examine your feet which may include checking the blood supply and sensation in your feet.

Once all of this information has been gathered there will be plenty of time for you to discuss anything you wish with your Consultant. It is important that you and your consultant reach a joint understanding of your problems and together agree on a shared decision about any treatment.

What should I expect to happen after the initial appointment?

Sometimes further tests are required such as X rays or an ultrasound scan, if these are needed, we will arrange these for you.

There are a number of different treatments that may be of help, some of which you may not have tried before and may be of value before considering surgery, these include: physical therapies such as stretching and strengthening regimes, injection therapies including corticosteroid injections, change in your footwear or the fitting of insole devices to change your walking pattern.

If you have tried all the non-surgical methods of managing your foot problem, then you may want to discuss the surgical treatment options with your Consultant.

What are the potential benefits of surgery?

Surgical treatments include the removal of soft tissue abnormalities, bony procedures to remove 'lumps or bumps' or the correction of toe deformities such as bunions and hammer toes.

The potential benefits of surgery are a reduction in pain, improved mobility and the ability to undertake normal daily activities, and to allow the better fitting of normal footwear.

There are many different types of surgery, your Consultant will discuss these and the potential benefits of any surgery with you and provide you with further written information so that you can decide what's best for you.

What are the risks of surgery?

Foot (podiatric) operations are commonly performed and generally safe operations. However, all surgery carries an element of risk, and certainly foot surgery will never result in a perfect foot.

There are of course a number of side effects and complications that can occur with surgery. Some of these will be relatively common but minor, while others can be uncommon but very serious. Your Consultant will discuss potential complications of any surgery offered to you and will provide you with further details in written information leaflets.

Giving your consent for surgery

If you decide that you want to go ahead with any surgery offered to you, we will ask you to sign a consent form giving us your permission to undertake this for you. It is vitally important that you have all your queries and questions fully answered and know as much as you want about the surgery, any risks, complications, potential benefits, any alternative treatments and what would happen if you

didn't have any surgery. Please feel free to ask as much as you want and even after you have signed a consent form you can still of course change your mind at any time.

What types of anaesthetic are available?

Foot (podiatric) operations can be undertaken under general anesthetic (asleep), spinal anesthetic or under local anesthetic.

For local anesthesia injections are used to numb your toe or your whole foot.

Using local anaesthetic avoids the very small risks associated with a general anaesthetic, any associated nausea or vomiting and allows you to be treated and discharged home usually within two hours.

Local anaesthetic works very well. You would probably feel some stinging discomfort as the anaesthetic is injected and an occasional feeling of pressure or hot/ cold sensation during the operation.

A spinal anaesthetic requires an anaesthetist to administer a local anaesthetic through a needle into the small of your back to numb the nerves from the waist down to the toes. Sedation may also be used.

At Independent Health Group all of the operations are performed under local anaesthetic. If you prefer a general or spinal anaesthetic just let us know and we can arrange this for you elsewhere.

What is the recovery time after surgery?

For most Podiatric Surgery, you will be advised to rest completely for the first 48 hours following surgery, with your foot elevated above hip level. You may only get up for visits to the bathroom during this time.

You will usually receive a phone call from one of our nurses the day after your surgery to check on your progress and offer any support you need. After 2 days you may get up for approximately 10 minutes every hour and then rest with your foot elevated for the other 50 minutes.

It takes approximately two weeks for the skin to heal, 6 to 8 weeks for bone to heal and up to 6 months for swelling to resolve. This is a guide only as everyone heals differently depending on their general health, how well they take care of their surgical site and what surgery they have had. Your Consultant will discuss this in detail with you before your surgery. For further information please refer to the College of Podiatry website at https://cop.org.uk/foot-health/podiatric-surgery/.

Driving and time off work

If you have a toenail operation or removal of soft tissue, we would usually recommend 2 weeks off work until the skin has healed.

If you have had an operation on the bones of your feet you will not be able to drive for at least 6 weeks until the bone has healed, and you are able to perform an emergency stop. Depending on what your work is you may require 2 months off work, especially if you do physical work.

Feedback or Complaints

At Independent Health Group we endeavour to provide a service that does everything to satisfy the expectations of all our patients. We acknowledge that on occasions it may be necessary for a patient to raise concerns with regard to the way in which they have been treated.

Should you wish to make a complaint or raise a concern in person, please feel free to speak to any member of staff.
If your complaint cannot be resolved immediately, we will follow our written complaints procedure and provide you with a written response to your complaint.

Please make your complaint to:

Head of Quality and Governance
Independent Health Group
8 The Office Village
Bath Business Park
Peasedown St. John
BA2 8SG

Email: ihg.referralsandenquiries@nhs.net
Tel: 03330 100 362

A full copy of the Independent Health Group Management of Complaints and Concerns policy can be obtained on request from the Head of Quality and Governance.