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Cheilectomy of the big toe

Cheilectomy is an operation to remove a bony lump on the top of the main joint of the big toe, the first metatarsophalangeal joint. This is almost always caused by arthritis. (also known as "hallux rigidus").

Why would it be performed?

Cheilectomy surgery is performed either because the bony lump is pressing painfully with shoe wear or due to it limiting the bending of the toe.

What does the operation involve?

An incision is made on the side of the big toe, the lump at the top is removed and the joint is cleaned out. The joint can also be checked to see how bad the arthritis is. The joint and wounds are closed with stitches and dressings applied. Sometimes the surgeon will recommend a 'Moberg's Osteotomy' as well. This realigns the big toe a little so that it is more comfortable to walk.

If the surgery is done for arthritis, and the arthritis is worse than it appears on x-ray prior to surgery, further surgery may be required but this will be discussed with you before the operation.

For more information on what to expect after surgery, please speak to your surgeon for more detailed information.