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## **Fusion of the big toe**

Fusion of the big toe is an operation to stiffen the joint at the base of the great toe (first metatarsophalangeal joint), removing bony bumps and correcting any deformity.

### **Why would it be performed?**

Usually a fusion of the big toe is performed due to arthritis of the joint. This may be isolated arthritis of the big toe ("hallux rigidus") or part of generalized arthritis of the foot such as rheumatoid arthritis.

The toe may also be fused to correct a severe deformity of the toe, such as a bunion ("hallux valgus").

A fusion may also be used as a salvage option after failure of another operation on the big toe, especially if there is weakness, pain, or deformity.

### **What does the operation involve?**

An incision is made along the side of the toe and the joint is opened. The arthritic joint surfaces are removed and shaped to correct any deformity. Once in the desired position it is held with either screws or a small plate. The wound is sutured closed and a soft, bulky dressing is applied.

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