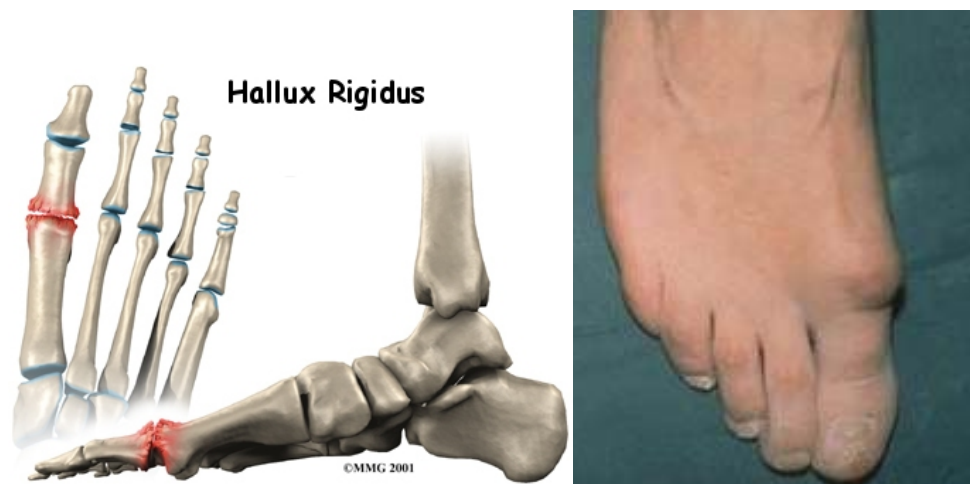




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Hallux Rigidus



Hallux rigidus is a degenerative type of arthritis that affects the large joint at the base of the big toe.

The condition may follow an injury to the joint or, in some cases, may arise without a well-defined injury.

Where does hallux rigidus occur?

The joint at the base of the big toe is called the metatarsophalangeal, or MTP, joint

The articular surface can wear away until raw bone rubs against raw bone.

Bone spurs form around the joint as part of the degenerative process. The spurs, or bony outgrowths, may restrict the motion in the joint, especially the ability of the toe to bend upward.

Why do I have this problem?

Many surgeons feel that, in many cases, the condition begins with an injury to the articular cartilage lining the joint, such as from stubbing the big toe. The injury sets in motion a degenerative process that may last for years before symptoms occur that need treatment.

Other cases of hallux rigidus seem to arise without any type of serious injury. This suggests that there may be other reasons for the development of the condition. Minor differences in the anatomy of the foot may make it more likely that certain individuals develop hallux rigidus.

What does hallux rigidus feel like?

The degeneration causes two problems--pain and loss of motion in the MTP joint of the great toe.

Without the ability of the MTP to move enough to allow the foot to roll through a full step, walking can become painful and difficult.

X-rays are usually required to appreciate the extent of the degeneration and bone spur formation.

Nonsurgical Treatment

1. Anti-inflammatory medications to control the pain, swelling
2. Special shoes that reduce the amount of bend in the toe during walking will also help the symptoms initially
3. A rocker type of sole allows the shoe to take some of the bending force.
4. An injection of cortisone into the joint may give temporary relief



Surgery

1. Cheilectomy

This is a procedure to remove the bone spurs at the top of the joint so that it can move together

when the toe extends.

This allows the toe to bend better and reduces the amount of pain while walking.

To perform a cheilectomy, an incision is made along the top of the joint.

The bone spurs that are blocking the joint from extending are identified and removed from both the

bones that make up the joint.



2. Joint Fusion [Arthrodesis]

Many surgeons favor arthrodesis, or fusion, of the MTP joint to relieve the pain.

To perform a fusion, an incision is made into the MTP joint. The joint surfaces are removed.

The two surfaces are then fixed with either a metal pin or screw, with the toe turned slightly upward

to allow for walking.

The bones are then allowed to fuse. The fusion usually takes about three months to become solid.

3. Artificial Joint Replacement

Is not universal operation

Is not a good procedure at the present time.

What should I expect following treatment?

It will take about eight weeks before the bones and soft tissues are well healed.

You may be placed in a wooden-soled shoe or a cast. You will probably need crutches briefly.

Complication

1. Malaligned toe: Technical problem
2. Infection
3. Inability to wear shoes with different heels