

What to Expect After Having a Cheilectomy to Your Big Toe Joint

For patients of Dr. Lau

What is a cheilectomy?

A cheilectomy is a surgery to remove extra bone (bone spur) from the joint of your big toe.

Why do I need this surgery?

You have arthritis in the big toe that has caused a bone spur. We do this surgery to lessen pain when the big toe bends up. It may make the toe bend a little easier.

Note: The surgery does not remove the arthritis. Your pain could come back if your arthritis gets worse.

What to expect after the surgery

On the day of your surgery:

Your foot is wrapped in a bandage and you wear a surgical shoe (special shoe that protects the foot). Do not change the bandage or take off the surgical shoe, even at night.

Expect your foot to be numb for 12 to 24 hours after the surgery.

To manage pain:

- Prop up your foot when you are sitting or lying down by putting pillows under your foot. This lessens swelling.
- Take pain medications as you need.

On the day after surgery:

You can start walking on the outside or heel of the foot while wearing your surgical shoe. Do not take off the surgical shoe.

Keep propping up your foot and taking pain medications as you need to manage your pain.

When to call surgeon:

Call Dr. Lau's office at 416 603 6292 right away if:

- your wound is still bleeding the day after surgery
- your foot feels numb or tingling the day after surgery
- your toes change colour (purple, white, or spotted) at any time

2 weeks after surgery:

You have a follow-up appointment in Fracture Clinic at Toronto Western.

- We take new x-rays to check on your recovery.
- We remove the bandage and sutures (stitches).

Start moving the big toe as much as you can. Move it for 5 minutes at a time, 3 or more times each day.

You can take the surgical shoe off when your pain lessens and start walking on the foot normally.

6 weeks after surgery:

You have a follow-up appointment at Dr. Lau's office at Toronto Western.

You can start walking on the foot normally.

What side effects can I expect?

Your toe may be swollen for 6 to 12 months after surgery. It may feel throbbing, achy and uncomfortable at the end of the day. This is normal and gets better over time.

For more information:

Dr. Johnny T.C. Lau, MD, MSc, FRCSC
Orthopaedic Surgeon, Foot & Ankle Surgery
Assistant Professor, University of Toronto

Phone: 416 603 6292

Fax: 416 603 3437

Address:

Schroeder Arthritis Institute
University Health Network
Toronto Western Hospital
Room 13MC423
399 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario M5T 2S8