



# FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



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## Treating Bunions—From Conservative to Minimally Invasive Surgery

As spring arrives and you trade boots for lighter footwear, you may be looking forward to one thing above all else: relief from **bunion pain**. Spring is a welcome reminder that open-toed shoes are just around the corner—and with them, a break from painful friction and pressure.



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But while switching to more comfortable footwear helps, it's only part of the picture. The good news is that there's a full spectrum of treatment options—from simple at-home strategies to advanced minimally invasive surgery—that can address bunion pain at its source. And if you don't yet have bunions, there's plenty you can do to prevent them.

### What Causes Bunion Pain?

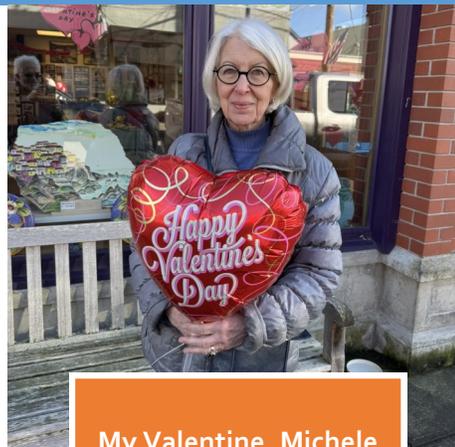
Bunions don't happen by chance. They typically develop in people who have certain foot types that place excess stress on the joint at the base of the big toe. These include:

- Flat feet (low or collapsed arches)
- High arches
- Overpronation—a tendency to roll your feet inward when walking or running

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Lucy and Whidbey



My Valentine, Michele

## Amazing, Easy Turkey Tacos

Who doesn't love taco night. Here's a switch-up using turkey, rather than ground beef!

*For the taco meat:*

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 white onion, diced
- 1 pound 94% lean ground turkey (can also use 99% lean if you desire)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (8 oz) can tomato sauce (1 cup)
- 1/4 cup water (only if making stovetop version)
- 2 1/2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- *Optional toppings:*
- 8 soft corn tortillas (or flour if you prefer)
- 3/4 cup grape tomatoes, quartered (can also use 1 large tomato, diced)
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 avocado, diced (or guacamole)
- Shredded lettuce
- Sliced fresh or pickled jalapenos



Source: [Ambitious Kitchen](#)

## Instructions

1. Add olive oil to a large skillet and place over medium high heat. Add diced onions and turkey. Brown the turkey, and break up the meat with a wooden spoon until nice and browned, about 5 minutes.
2. Add in garlic, tomato sauce, water, cumin, chili powder, oregano, paprika, cayenne pepper and salt. Stir to combine. Simmer over medium low heat for 10-15 minutes or until mixture begins to thicken up
3. Once ready to serve, divide meat between 8 corn tortillas. Add optional toppings: tomatoes, cheese, diced avocado/guacamole, lettuce and jalapeno. Serves 4. Optional to serve with greek yogurt, if desired.

As a result of that stress the big toe becomes hypermobile and over time drifts toward the little toes, creating the characteristic bump.

If you didn't have to wear shoes it wouldn't be much of an issue, but friction from the bunion can cause persistent pain, swelling, and redness. Left untreated, bunions tend to progress—making early intervention important.

### Conservative Treatments: Managing Pain and Slowing Progression

Our first goal is always to reduce your discomfort and slow the progression of the bunion without surgery. Conservative treatments won't reverse a bunion—but they can make a meaningful difference in your day-to-day quality of life.

#### Change Your Footwear

- Buy footwear with a wide, deep toe box
- Avoid pointed-toe shoes and high heels, which can accelerate bunion development.
- Look for shoes with soft, flexible uppers and to reduce friction.



#### Use Protective Padding

Protective padding can help eliminate the friction against shoes and help alleviate inflammation and skin problems.

#### Custom Orthotics

Custom orthotics can help stabilize the joint and place the foot in the correct position for walking and standing.

### When Surgery is the Best Option for Bunions

Ask yourself the following questions to determine if you're a candidate for surgery.

- Are my bunions more painful even with my current treatment?
- Has it become more difficult to wear close-

- toed shoes
- Are my bunions greatly affecting my quality of life?

If you answered yes to these questions, it's time to consider surgery.

Modern bunion surgery has advanced considerably, and many patients are excellent candidates for minimally invasive techniques.

### What Is Minimally Invasive Bunion Surgery?

Unlike traditional open bunion surgery, minimally invasive bunion surgery uses very small incisions and specialized instruments to realign the bones of the big toe.



#### Advantages Over Traditional Surgery

- Smaller incisions and less visible scarring
- Reduced post-operative pain and swelling
- Faster recovery and return to normal footwear and activity

### Traditional Open Bunion Surgery

In some cases—particularly for severe or complex bunions—a traditional open bunionectomy may be recommended. Recovery takes longer, but results are highly effective, and the procedure remains the gold standard.

### How to Prevent Bunions

If you have a foot type that predisposes you to bunions—or if bunions run in your family—taking early preventive steps can make a real difference.

- Wear shoes with a wide toe box and proper arch support
- Avoid high heels and pointed-toe shoes for extended periods
- Use custom orthotics to address underlying

## Movement and Brain Health: Why Staying Active Protects Your Mind

When most people think about exercise, they focus on muscles, weight, or heart health. But movement is just as important for your **brain**.

Regular physical activity increases blood flow to the brain, delivering oxygen and nutrients that support memory, focus, and mental clarity. Exercise also triggers the release of brain chemicals that improve mood and reduce stress.

Staying active helps support brain plasticity, the brain's ability to adapt and form new connections. This is important at every age. Consistent movement may help slow age-related memory changes and support long-term cognitive health.



You don't need intense workouts to see benefits. Simple activities can make a real difference:

- Walking outdoors
- Cycling or light jogging
- Strength training a few times per week
- Stretching or yoga for balance and focus

Consistency matters more than intensity. Just 20–30 minutes most days can support better brain health.

Movement also improves sleep quality, which plays a key role in memory, concentration, and overall mental performance.

As spring approaches, it's a great time to get moving again. Staying active isn't just about feeling

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—Dr. Rion Berg



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