

Aid for Hallux valgus – Germany’s secret common condition

Hallux valgus, also called “bunion”, is one of the most frequent malpositionings of the foot. In Germany about 10 million people are affected, 80 % of them are women.

With Hallux valgus the big toe is forced outward. The metatarsal bone and the metatarsal capitulum belonging to it, the “bunion”, protrude clearly (Fig. 1). Initially a cosmetic problem, in due time serious pain can develop. Inflammations and swelling of the ball, incorrect loading and initial joint attrition (arthrosis) can lead to strong and persistent pain.

Beside an inherited predisposition, the reasons for the development of a Hallux valgus are, among others, a combination of an inherited disposition, a tendency towards weak supporting and connective tissue and a muscular imbalance. Malpositioning is enhanced by wearing too tight, too pointy and too small shoes; however, the deformation is not caused by that. According to the degree of severity, Hallux valgus patients may be treated conservatively or surgically.

EFFECTIVE AID IN THE CASE OF HALLUX VALGUS

A special splint system, Hallufix®, designed in cooperation with the renowned Fraunhofer Institute, helps relieve pain and corrects big toe malpositioning or Hallux valgus. The internationally patented splint system is the result of a perennial cooperation of orthopedists, orthopedic technicians and scientists. The dynamic splint is fastened to the foot via a toe and metatarsal bandage, which holds the transversal arch and supports the metatarsal with a pad (Fig. 2, 3). The metatarsal is optimally stabilized, the bunion relieved, the malpositioning of the toe is corrected and the foot is brought back and held in its natural position. Due to a joint incorporated at the height of the bunion, the base joint of the big toe can move freely and naturally while the splint is being worn. Thus this bandage – contrary to rigid Hallux valgus night splints – can be worn during the day while walking and under load. The thin Hallufix® splint is made of bending-resistant material and can be worn comfortably in almost any shoe.

EARLY USE RECOMMENDED

Worn timely and prophylactically, regular wearing of Hallufix® can considerably help postpone or even prevent an operation. Medical specialists, therefore, recommend an early application in order to counteract further progression of the malpositioning. Studies demonstrate a pronounced reduction of postoperative rehab-time and a very good stabilization of the surgical correction of the toe’s position following a Hallux valgus operation.

POSTOPERATIVE USE OF THE HALLUFIX® SPLINT

In a study in Munich comparing the postoperative use of the Hallufix® splint system with a rigid night splint 56 cases were evaluated:

Significant improvement in gait was observed in the 5th postoperative week, reflected in an up to 13 % improvement in the rolling behavior of the first ray.

The comparison group with the night splint demonstrated increased, unphysiological rolling over the lateral side of the foot. According to the last podographic measurement, rolling behavior (load on the first ray) had also improved significantly (15%). The clinical/radiological Hallux angle displays no difference in both groups, thus the advantage of the Hallufix splint lies clearly in the early physiological



Fig. 2: The dynamic splint system Hallufix® stabilizes the metatarsal, relieves the painful bunion, corrects the malpositioning of the toe and returns the foot to its natural shape.



Fig. 1: X-ray of a Hallux valgus.



Fig. 3: X-ray of a Hallux valgus with a splint attached.

load. However, compared to the night splint there is an improvement with respect to postoperatively achieved (and maintained) correction angles.

Conclusion: The results so far underline the advantages of the Hallufix® splint assumed to date by a significantly improved rolling behavior and an early load on the first ray. The postoperative gait of the patients using Hallufix is much better than the comparison group and side comparison displays no difference, whereas a limp can be detected with patients using the night splint.

Hallufix® comes in one size and can be purchased in medical supplies stores, pharmacies or at www.hallufix.de and can be worn left and right. (mk)