

Synthetic cartilage implant insertion for first metatarsophalangeal joint osteoarthritis (hallux rigidus)

Information for the public

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For people with advanced hallux rigidus who would otherwise have their joint fused, there is not much evidence about how well this procedure works. So it can only be done with special arrangements. This means you will have regular appointments afterwards to check how well it is working or if it has caused problems.

For all other people with hallux rigidus, this procedure can only be done as part of a research study. This is because there is not enough evidence to be sure how well it works.

Your healthcare professional should talk with you about the research.

Osteoarthritis in the big toe joint (the first metatarsophalangeal joint) can result in a condition called hallux rigidus. Cartilage in the joint wears away, causing pain and stiffness. In this procedure, which is done under general or regional anaesthesia, damaged cartilage is replaced with an artificial (synthetic) implant. A small cut is made over the top of the big toe joint, a hole is drilled into the bone and the implant is pressed into the hole. The aim is to reduce pain and improve mobility.

The [NHS website](#) may have information on your condition and treatment options.

You can [search the NHS website for information about consultants and hospitals](#) that offer this procedure.

Is this procedure right for me?

You should be included in [making decisions about your care](#).

Your healthcare professionals should explain the risks and benefits of this procedure and how it is done. They should discuss your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should offer you more information about the procedure. Your family or carers can be involved if you want or need them to be.

You will be asked to decide whether you agree (consent) to have the procedure. Find out more about [giving consent to treatment on the NHS website](#).

Some questions to think about

- How many appointments will I need?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- Will I have to stay in hospital?
- What happens if it does not work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I do not want the procedure?
- Are other treatments available?

More information

- [NICE's information on interventional procedures guidance](#) explains what an interventional procedure is and how we assess it.
- [NICE's information on interventional procedures recommendations](#) explains what special arrangements are and what only in research means.

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