



Suffolk Podiatry

Steroid Injections & Surgery

Many foot conditions can be successfully managed with self-care measures such as changing footwear, using insoles, or carrying out stretching and strengthening exercises. However, if symptoms do not improve after 6 months, it might be possible to undergo more invasive treatments such as steroid injections or surgery, depending on the condition.

Suffolk Podiatry does not provide these treatments, but your GP practice can refer you to your local orthopaedic or foot surgery team for assessment via the MSK single point of access pathway.

What to consider before seeing a Foot Surgeon

Before being considered for any invasive procedures, patients are required to try non-surgical care for a minimum of **6 months**.

If you smoke, stopping smoking will improve healing and reduce the risk of complications following steroid injections or surgery.

Non-surgical options to try before considering referral for steroid injection or surgery:

- **Footwear change:** Wearing the right footwear can significantly help with your foot pain. See the Footwear Advice leaflet on our website: <https://suffolkfed.org.uk/healthcare-services/podiatry/>
- **Reducing pressure on your feet:** Reducing excess pressure on the feet, including through weight management where appropriate, may help improve symptoms. Feel Good Suffolk offers support for a range of lifestyle changes: <https://feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/>
- **Use of pain relief medication:** Over-the-counter medications such as paracetamol or ibuprofen may help. Always read the instructions. If you are unsure, consult a pharmacist or your GP practice
- **Insoles/splints/padding:** Insoles can help relieve pressure on painful areas. "Buying Insoles to Help Your Foot Pain" is available on our website: <https://suffolkfed.org.uk/healthcare-services/podiatry/>

Referral for surgical assessment should only be considered as a last resort due to the potential for complications and long-term recovery periods following surgery.

Steroid Injection:

Steroid (corticosteroid) injections are anti-inflammatory medicines used to treat a range of conditions in the foot such as joint pain and arthritis.

Steroid injections can have complications and should only be considered if you have tried other non-surgical options first.



Surgery:

Surgery should only be considered if you are experiencing severe pain, extreme difficulty finding comfortable footwear because of the shape of your foot, or significant limitations with your daily living activities due to your foot or ankle condition.

You will only be considered for surgery after an appropriate period of non-surgical treatment, usually 3–6 months, depending on your symptoms and diagnosis.

What should I expect from a steroid injection?

Steroid injections take place in outpatient clinics and you should be able to go home after your injection.

Injections can take a few days to start working, but some work in a few hours. The effects vary between individuals and may last from weeks to several months.

After a steroid injection, you will not be able to drive yourself home, so you will need to arrange alternative transport. You will also be advised to rest for **2–4 days** afterwards and may need to take time off work during this period.

What should I expect from surgery?

Surgical procedures may take place either in an outpatient clinic or the main hospital and do not normally require you to stay in hospital overnight, although in some instances this may be necessary.

You are likely to need significant time off work and away from your usual activities, including driving, during your recovery period.

Procedures are usually carried out under regional anaesthesia, meaning you will not need to be unconscious. A series of injections are administered around the ankle, toe or knee depending on the type of surgery being undertaken.

Things to consider for after your surgery:

- After your surgery, you will need a responsible adult with you for the rest of the day and night after surgery. For the first 1 – 2 weeks you should rest completely, only moving to the bathroom and back.
- You may be required to wear a plaster cast or air-cast boot for many weeks. You may be required to walk with the aid of crutches.
- You may not be able to drive for 6 – 8 weeks after surgery and you are likely to be off work for up to 12 weeks, especially if your work is manual.



(The above advice may differ depending on your circumstances and the type of treatment that has been recommended – always follow the advice of your surgical team.)

There are always risks associated with surgical procedures such as infection, blood clots or poor healing. The surgery team will discuss this with you. It may be up to 12 months before you feel the full benefit of any surgical procedure.

If you have any further queries about possible treatments, please talk to your GP practice or other Healthcare Professional.