



UM-CDG-040 Surgical Procedures of the Foot

Approved By:  
Director, Health Services

Effective Date:  
10/22/2025

*This Policy applies to all SECUR affiliates, associates, and subsidiaries.*

Approved by Courtney Gonzales, Director of Health Services on behalf of the Utilization Management Committee.

## PURPOSE

This coverage determination guideline serves to address surgical procedures of the foot.

For SECUR Health Plan members, National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD) will be applied to requests when applicable. SECUR Health Plan Coverage Determination Guidelines (CDG) will be utilized in the absence of an appropriate NCD and/or LCD.

## DEFINITIONS

**Bunion/Hallux Valgus Deformity:** consists of lateral deviation from a straight line of the great toe toward the other toes of the foot with medical deviation of the first metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint.

**Bunionette/Tailor's Bunion:** bony prominence on the lateral side of the fifth metatarsal head (toe).

**Hallux Limitus:** refers to the great toe that lacks normal motion but does not demonstrate degenerative changes at the MTP joint.

**Hallux Rigidus:** progressive disorder characterized by limitation of movement along with dorsal bunion at the MTP joint of the great toe.

**Lisfranc Joint/Midtarsal/Tarsometatarsal Joint (TMT):** terms used interchangeably, comprised of the five metatarsal bones M1-M5, cuneiforms C1-C3, and the cuboid bone.

**Arthrodesis:** fusion surgical option for the treatment of TMT instability.

**Total Prosthetic Arthroplasty:** also known as first MTP joint replacement, is an alternative to an arthrodesis.

**Ceramic (Moje implant) and Modular (Metis implant):** are MTP joint replacement implants not yet approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**Molded Cylindrical First MTP Joint Implant:** created from a biocompatible hydrogel made of polyvinyl alcohol and saline has elastic and compressive mechanical properties similar to articular cartilage and maintains range of motion (ROM) in the joint.

**Hammertoe:** an abnormal flexion posture at the proximal interphalangeal (PIP) joint of one or more of the lesser four toes.

## POLICY

### **Bunion/Hallux Valgus Deformity**

SECUR Health Plan will consider bunion surgical treatment as medically necessary when the following is met:

1. Radiographic evidence with weight bearing anterior/posterior (A/P) and lateral views of an intermetatarsal (IM) angle greater than 9 degrees and/or hallux valgus (HV) angle greater than 20 degrees for bony correction bunionectomy, or
2. Radiographic evidence with weight bearing A/P and lateral views of an HV angle of 15 degrees or greater

and no degenerative changes to the MTP joint for simple bunionectomy or soft tissue correction of the HV, and

3. Documentation provided supporting the failure of preprocedural conservative treatment when appropriate, including but not limited to at least one of the following:
  - Alternative or modified footwear, or
  - Foot orthotics, or
  - Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or oral analgesics if medically appropriate and not contraindicated, or
  - Protective cushions, pads, or toe spacers, and
  - Development of neuroma secondary to the bunion, or
  - Limited or painful ROM and pain upon palpation at the first toe MTP joint, or
  - Painful prominence of the dorsiflexed second toe due to pressure from the first toe

Bunion surgical treatment will be considered medically necessary for a nonhealing ulceration caused by a bunion. Repeat bunion surgical treatment will be considered medically necessary following failure of a surgical procedure.

### **Hallux Limitus/Rigidus**

SECUR Health Plan will consider surgical correction of the MTP joint as medically necessary when the following is met:

1. Radiographic evidence with weight bearing A/P and lateral views of osteoarthritis within the first MTP joint when performing surgical procedures for hallux rigidus as evidenced by:
  - Cysts in the metatarsal head, or
  - Loss of cartilage space between the bones, or
  - Mild to moderate bony proliferative pathology, and
2. Documentation provided showing evidence of failure of preprocedural conservative treatment when appropriate.

Radiographic evidence is NOT required for hallux limitus.

### **Bunionette**

SECUR Health Plan will consider Bunionette surgery as medically necessary when the following is met:

1. Radiographic evidence with weight bearing A/P and lateral views of an IM angle 10 degrees or greater and lateral deviation angle of 14 degrees or greater of the fifth MTP joint when performing an osteotomy, or
2. Radiographic evidence with weight bearing A/P and lateral views of bony prominence when performing simple resection, and
3. Documentation provided showing evidence of failure of preprocedural conservative treatment when appropriate.

Repeat Bunionette surgical treatment will be considered medically necessary following failure of a surgical procedure.

### **Hammertoe**

SECUR Health Plan will consider surgical treatment for hammer toe as medically necessary when the following is met:

1. Radiographic confirmation of hammer toe deformity with interpretation of A/P and later views, and
2. Documentation provided showing evidence of failure of preprocedural conservative treatment when appropriate, and
3. Adventitious bursa on the hammertoe, or

4. Ankyloses of the PIP and/or DIP joints, or
5. Interdigital neuroma caused by the deformity, or
6. Lateral MTP capsular tear caused by the deformity, or
7. Subluxation or dislocation of the MTP joint caused by the deformity, or
8. Synovitis/capsulitis of the MTP joint, or
9. Ulceration caused by the deformity

Repeat hammer toe surgery will be considered medically necessary following failure of a surgical procedure.

### **MTP Joint Replacement**

SECUR Health Plan will consider partial or total replacement of the first MTP joint with an FDA-approved device as medically necessary when the following are met:

1. Radiographic confirmation with weight bearing A/P and lateral views of disabling hallux valgus or disabling degenerative or post traumatic arthritis, and
2. Absence of all the following:
  - Active infection in the foot
  - Allergy to implant material
  - Inadequate bone stock due to avascular necrosis, congenital dislocation, large (greater than 1 cm) osteochondral cyst, malignancy, or osteoporosis
3. Lesions of the first MTP joint greater than 10 mm
4. Systemic and metabolic disorders leading to progressive deterioration of bone and/or tumors of the supporting bone structures, and
5. Documentation provided showing evidence of failure of preprocedural conservative treatment when appropriate.

Total replacement of the first MTP joint will be considered medically necessary following failure of a previous proximal phalanx resection surgical procedure.

### **Midtarsal/Tarsometatarsal (Lisfranc) Injury Imaging**

SECUR Health Plan will consider midtarsal/tarsometatarsal (Lisfranc) imaging as medically necessary with the following:

1. Initial x-ray, or
2. Advanced imaging when initial x-ray is equivocal or when helpful for definitive treatment planning

### **Midtarsal/Tarsometatarsal Fusion**

SECUR Health Plan will consider midtarsal/tarsometatarsal fusion (Lisfranc joint) as medically necessary when the following is met:

No evidence of the following:

- Active infection
- Inflammatory arthritis
- Non-ambulatory status
- Severe medical comorbidity
- Soft tissue compromise

And one of the following:

1. Radiographic evidence with weight bearing (if possible) A/P, lateral, and oblique views of joint instability, or
2. Inability to bear weight and no instability detected on initial radiographic imaging with all the following:
  - X-rays repeated on two week follow up with no instability detected

- Persistent edema, tenderness of tarsometatarsal joint or plantar ecchymosis
  - Stress x-ray with findings of instability, or
3. Chronic injury that has led to post traumatic osteoarthritis

Current medical literature shows no evidence to show efficacy or long-term effects of joint fixation implant or replacement and thus will not be considered medically necessary by SECUR Health Plan.

Additionally, replacement of the first MTP joint will not be considered medically necessary with ceramic prosthesis (Moje), modular implant (Metis), or molded cylindrical implant (Cartiva SCI) as these are not approved by the FDA.

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