

# Difference Between Bunion and Corn

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## Key Difference – Bunion vs Corn

Bunion and corn are two inflammatory reactions caused by the action of undue pressure on the skin and bony structures. A bunion is an inflamed subcutaneous bursa formed as a result of the misalignment of the first metatarsal and sesamoid bones. A corn is an inflamed area of thick skin. Thus, the difference between bunion and corn is that **corn is formed superficially whereas bunion is formed within the underlying subcutaneous tissues.**

## What is a Bunion?

Hallux valgus, which is often called a bunion, is a foot deformity characterized by the lateral deviation of the great toe. This condition is caused by bone degenerative diseases or tight fitting foot wear that compress the feet. In the most extreme cases, great toe overlaps the second toe, decreasing the convexity of the medial longitudinal arch. This condition is almost always seen in women, and the incidence of the deformity increases with advancing age.

The unique feature of hallux valgus is the inability to move the first digit away from the second digit due to the misalignment of the sesamoids which are located under the head of the first metatarsal. The medial movement of the first metatarsal and the lateral movement of the sesamoids into space between first and second digits is the anatomical basis of this deformity. The movements of these bony structures compress the adjacent **tissues**, and the resultant pressure leads to the formation of a subcutaneous bursa. When this bursa gets **inflamed** and becomes painful, it is called a bunion.



**Figure 01: Bunion**

## **Diagnosis**

- Diagnosis is usually made based on the clinical features.
- X rays can be taken to exclude other possible causes such as gout.

## **Treatment**

- Resting and wearing loose foot wear can minimize the pain.
- If the pain is severe analgesics can be given.
- Anti inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen are administered to counter the inflammatory reactions taking place within the site of deformity
- Use of orthotics
- Surgical intervention is required if the symptoms persist.

## **What is a Corn?**

Corns are inflamed areas of thick skin. These are formed by the continuous rubbing of skin against rough surfaces. Corns are usually formed on the surfaces of the feet that are prone to get **friction** injuries. According to the morphology of these skin deformities, they are categorized into various forms such as hard corns, soft corns, and seed corns. A **hard corn** usually consists of a thick band of dead skin surrounding a patch of viable skin at the center. A **soft corn** has relatively thin

segments of dead skin. A **seed corn** is a cluster of tiny corns appearing together usually on the plantar surfaces of the feet.

## Causes

- Tight foot wear with a rough finish
- Abnormalities in the gait
- Wearing shoes without socks
- Deformities of the feet

Breaches in the dead skin of the corns facilitate the entry of potential [pathogens](#) into the body. The lack of blood supply to counter the action of these pathogens increases the risk of an impending infection. Therefore, if a corn starts to discharge pus and secretions, medical attention should be sought immediately, especially if you have diabetes or other comorbidities that suppress your [immune system](#).



Figure 02: Corn

## Treatment

- Most corns are self-limiting and disappear spontaneously.
- If the corns get infected, it is necessary to clean the site of infection and **antibiotics** should be given to prevent the systemic spread of the infection.
- Occasionally, **salicylic acid** is used to remove the corns.

## What are the similarities between Bunion and Corn?

- Both conditions are caused by inflammatory reactions provoked by the action of undue pressure on the skin and bony structures.

## What is the difference between Bunion and Corn?

Bunion vs Corn	
A bunion is an inflamed subcutaneous bursa formed as a result of misalignment of the first metatarsal and sesamoid bones.	Corns are inflamed areas of thick skin formed by the continuous rubbing of skin against rough surfaces.
Effect	
Underlying subcutaneous structures are affected.	Corns only affect the superficial skin.

## Summary- Bunion vs Corn

Both these conditions are inflammatory reactions provoked by the action of undue pressure on the skin and bony structures. The main difference between bunion and corn is their severity and the areas they affect. A bunion can have an effect on the underlying subcutaneous structures whereas corn only affects the superficial skin.

## Reference:

1. Moore, Keith L, and Arthur F. Dalley. *Clinically Oriented Anatomy*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 1999. Print.

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