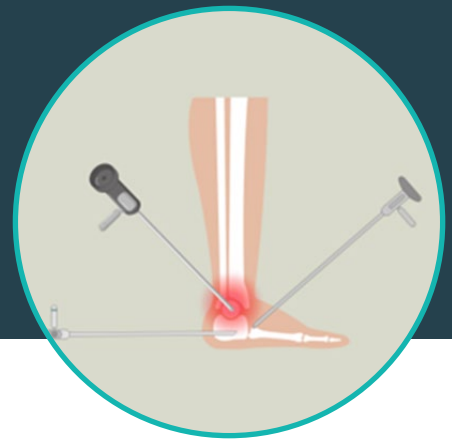


MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY



OVERVIEW

Minimally invasive surgery is also sometimes referred to as arthroscopic surgery. It makes use of small incisions and a camera to perform procedures. Dr Wessels does not make use of this type of surgery, since he believes that in foot surgery an open approach has better outcomes.

Below are some advantages and disadvantages of minimally invasive foot surgery.

ADVANTAGES

1. **Reduced trauma:** Less trauma to the skin and surrounding tissues. This can also be controversial since in arthroscopic surgery, injury to vessels and nerves can easily be made because of poor visualisation.
2. **Infection reduction:** Smaller risk of infection. This is also controversial, since minimally invasive surgery usually have a longer theatre time, which also means that your foot is exposed to possible infections for a longer time.
3. **Cosmetic:** Better cosmetic outcome. Smaller incisions look better cosmetically.
4. **Less pain:** Less post-operative pain because of the smaller incisions.

DISADVANTAGES

1. **Technical complexity:** Performing surgery through smaller incisions requires specialized training and expertise. Outcomes are seldom better in the long run.
2. **Limited visibility and maneuverability:** The smaller incisions used may provide limited visibility and maneuverability compared to traditional open surgery. This can make it more challenging for surgeons to access and adequately address certain foot problems. Complicated and redo surgeries are too difficult to use a minimally invasive approach.
3. **Risk of incomplete correction:** Due to limited visibility and maneuverability, there is a risk of incomplete correction or inadequate treatment of foot conditions. Surgeons must be highly skilled and experienced to ensure optimal outcomes and avoid the need for revision surgery.
4. **Potential for nerve injury:** It carries a risk of inadvertent injury to nerves due to the proximity of nerves to the surgical site and the limited visibility provided by smaller incisions. Nerve damage can result in sensory disturbances, pain, or other neurological complications postoperatively.
5. **Risk of complications:** A longer operating time can increase the risk of infection. A minimally invasive approach might also need to be converted to open surgery if the problem cannot be fixed. This would have then just cost time and money for no reason.
6. **Cost considerations:** Minimally invasive procedures may be associated with higher costs compared to traditional open surgery due to the use of specialized equipment and longer operating times.
7. **Not suitable for all conditions:** While it can be used to treat a variety of foot conditions, it may not be suitable for all patients or all types of foot problems. Certain complex or severe foot conditions may require traditional open surgery for optimal outcomes.

Healing occurs across the wound margin, not down its length. This means long incisions heal just as fast as short ones. Dr Wessels prefers making a slightly longer cut to have proper visualisation of the problem and fix it permanently.

It is interesting that many of the more experienced foot surgeons are now moving away from this approach.