



## Charcot Foot Treatment Options



**CONSERVATIVE  
TREATMENT**



**SURGICAL  
TREATMENT**



**EXTERNAL  
FIXATION**

### Overview

Charcot foot is a deformity that can result as a complication of diabetes and other conditions. It develops after you lose sensation in your legs and feet. The joints and bones of your foot begin to break down and collapse. You cannot feel these injuries, and you may continue to walk on the foot. This worsens the damage. Charcot foot is a disabling deformity. It can be difficult to treat, but there are techniques that can be used to correct it.

### Conservative Treatment

Charcot foot is easiest to treat in its early stages. Your doctor can manage the early symptoms with a cast or a boot. You may stay off the foot until it begins to heal. Over time, the fractured bones will fuse back together. The entire healing process can take months, and during this time you may need a series of casts as the shape of your foot changes.

### Surgical Treatment

In its later stages, Charcot foot may require surgery. In some cases, this may be as simple as removing a portion of bone that has shifted out of position and created a bump or a lesion in your skin. But if the bones of your foot are unstable, removing a piece of bone will not fix the problem. Your surgeon can use a combination of plates and screws or other devices to realign the bones and hold them in the correct position. You may also benefit from an ankle fusion procedure.

### External Fixation

Another treatment option is called "external fixation." With this technique, a frame made of three large metal rings is attached to your foot with pins that go through your skin and into the bones. The frame surrounds your foot. It holds your bones in the correct position so they can heal. External fixation may be combined with other surgical treatments, depending on your needs.

### Conclusion

The ultimate goal of any treatment is to realign your foot to prevent any further breakdowns. Once your foot is stable, you may need to wear a special shoe or a brace to prevent a recurrence.