



**Rotherham Doncaster
and South Humber**
NHS Foundation Trust

Chilblains

Advice for effective care



leading the way with care

Many people feel the cold in winter, but not everyone will develop chilblains. Whether they do or not depends to a large extent on the efficiency of your circulation. Chilblains are small itchy, red swellings on the skin, which can become increasingly painful, can swell and then dry out, leaving cracks in the skin, which expose you to the risk of infection. They can occur on the toes, particularly the smaller ones, fingers, the face, especially the nose, and the lobes of the ears. They can also occur on areas of the feet exposed to pressure, for instance, on a bunion, the tips of toes, or where tight shoes squeeze the second toe.

Cold feet

Chilblains are caused by the skin's abnormal reaction to cold. Damp or draughty conditions, dietary factors and hormonal imbalance can be contributory factors. If the skin is chilled and is then followed by too rapid warming next to a fire or hot water bottle, chilblains may result.

Who is most at risk?

This condition mainly affects young adults working outdoors in cold places or people who do not wear socks or tights in winter. Elderly people, whose circulation is less efficient than it used to be, people who don't take enough exercise, and those suffering from anaemia are also susceptible. People who smoke are more at risk of chilblains as nicotine constricts blood vessels.

What are the symptoms?

With the onset of the cold weather, susceptible people will experience burning and itching on their hands and feet. On going into a warm room, the itching and burning is intensified. There may be some swelling or redness, and in extreme cases, the surface of the skin may break, and sores (ulcers) may develop.

What can you do?

To help prevent chilblains, keep your body, feet and legs warm, especially if your circulation is poor and your mobility is limited. The whole body, rather than just the feet, needs to be kept warm. Several layers of clothing will help to keep you warm: trousers, long johns, high boots, tights and leg warmers or long socks with fleecy inner soles and thick, cushioned outer soles will help. Avoid going out early if possible, when the weather is generally colder, and wrap up well with a scarf, hat, gloves and coat. Avoid 'nipping out' with just your indoor clothes on, even if it is only for a couple of minutes. Natural fibre materials are advisable, as these help to hold warmth in against the skin, unlike man-made materials which tend to draw the heat away. Try to be active as this helps encourage circulatory flow.

You can also help prevent chilblains if you follow a regular foot health routine (see 'Looking after your feet' leaflet) and eat a healthy balanced diet.

If chilblains have developed

Don't scratch them; soothing lotions such as witch hazel or calamine will take away most of the discomfort. If the chilblain has ulcerated, apply an antiseptic dressing. If you are concerned about the appearance of the chilblain or have diabetes or are undergoing medical treatment, have the ulcer assessed by your GP or podiatrist.

If the chilblain hasn't broken you can paint it with a mixture of friar's balsam and a weak solution of iodine, which your pharmacist may make up for you, or an over-the-counter preparation. At night, rub some lanolin ointment or other good moisturisers well into the feet to help retain heat and moisture.

do not

- Use sharp instruments such as razor blades to cut corns or hard skin
- Use corn paints/corn plasters which contain acid
- Use ingrowing toenail paints as these contain acid.

When to seek medical advice

Most people don't need to seek medical advice if they have chilblains as they usually heal within a few weeks and don't cause any permanent problems. However, see your GP or podiatrist for advice if you have:

- Severe or recurring chilblains
- Signs of infection

Your GP may recommend taking a daily tablet called nifedipine which helps to relax blood vessels, improving circulation to the skin.

Podiatry services
Cantley Health Centre
Middleham Road
Goodison Boulevard
Cantley
Doncaster
DN4 6ED

Tel 01302 379550

If you would like this in large print, braille or on audiotape or would like this document in an alternative language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0800 015 4334.

Amharic

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Arabic

إذا أردت الحصول على هذه الوثيقة بالخط الكبير أو بلغة برايل أو على هيئة شريط صوتي أو مترجمة إلى لغة بديلة فيرجي الإتصال بخدمة
التنسيق ونصيحة المريض على رقم الهاتف 0800 015 4334 Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Bengali

আপনি যদি এটা বড় অক্ষরের ছাপায়, রেইল-এ, বা কানে শোনার টেইপ-এ পেতে চান অথবা আপনি যদি এই
কাগজটা আন্য কোন ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে 0800 015 4334 নংরে গেশেন্ট এ্যাডভাইস এন্ড লিয়েজ
সার্ভিসের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Cantonese (traditional Chinese)

如果你希望本文件是采用大字印刷、盲文或录音磁带等格式，或者希望本文件是使用其它的语言，请联系病患建议与联络服务（Patient Advice and Liaison Service），电话号码：0800 015 4334。

Czech

Pokud byste chtěli dokument psaný většími písmeny, brailovým písmem nebo na zvukové kazetě
nebo v jiném jazyku, prosím, kontaktujte poradenskou službu pacientů na tel. 0800 015 4334.

Farsi

در صورت تمایل به داشتن اون سند به نسخه ای با چاپ درشت تر، به خط بربل یا نسخه صوتی، و یا به زبانی دیگر، لطفاً با دفتر خدمات
مشاوره و هماهنگی بیماران به شماره تلفن ۰۸۰۰۱۵۴۳۳۴ تماس حاصل نمایید.

French

Si vous désirez ce document en gros caractères, en braille, enregistré sur cassette audio ou dans
une autre langue, veuillez contacter le service de conseils et liaison des patients [Patients Advice and
Liaison Service] au 0800 015 4334.

Kurdish Sorani

نام زانباريانه به چاپي گموره، برايل يان لعساري شريطي دهنگي دخوازيت باخود نهم پيالگانه به زانباري ديكه دخوازيت، تکابه
پيووندي يكه به خزمانگوزاري رنتماني و هانوانگي ناخوشاهه به زمانه 0800 015 4334

Polish

Jeżeli dokument wymagany jest w wersji drukowanej dużej czcionką lub alfabetem Braille'a, na
kasetce audio lub w innym języku, prosimy o kontakt z zespołem ds. kontaktów z pacjentami (Patient
Advice and Liaison Service) pod numerem telefonu 0800 015 4334.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਾਪਵੀ, ਬੋਲ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਣਦ ਵਾਲੀ ਫੋਟੋ ਤੋਂ ਚੁਣੌਤੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚੁਣੌਤੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ
ਕਰਕੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਲ-ਮਲ ਸੇਵਾ (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) ਨਾਲ 0800 015 4334 ਤੋਂ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Somali

Haddii aad jeelaan lahayd in aad kan ku hesho far waaweyn, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la'ama
cajalad dhegeysi ah ama haddii aad jeelaan lahayd in aad dukaameentigan ku hesho luqad kale,
fadijan Adeegga Taliboxinta iyo Xiriirinta ee Bukanleyda (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) kala
soo xiriir lambarka 0800 015 4334.

Turkish

Bu belgeyi büyük yazı, braille (kör alfabesi) veya ses kaydı olarak veya başka bir dilde almak istiyorsanız,
lütften 0800 015 4334 no.lu telefondan Hasta Danışmanlık ve İrtibat Hizmetleri ile bağlantıya geçiniz.

Urdu

اگر آپ یہ بڑی چھپائی، بریل میں یا صوتی نسخہ پر حاصل کرنے پاہیں یا یہ دستاں کی تباہی زبان میں پاہیں تو ہر کوئی کم پیش ایجادہ اکس پینڈلریز ان سروس سے
0800 015 4334 پر رابطہ کریں۔

Vietnamese

Nếu muốn có tài liệu này dưới dạng in chữ cỡ lớn hơn, chữ nổi braille hay bảng ghi
âm, hoặc bảng một ngôn ngữ khác, xin quý vị liên hệ bộ phận Dịch vụ Tư vấn và
Liên lạc với Bệnh nhân theo số 0800 015 4334.

This information is correct at the time of publishing
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