

Looking after your feet

A self-help guide for patients and carers



Tips for safe footcare

Good footcare can mean painless, healthy feet.

If you get into a daily routine, your feet are more likely to stay healthy.

Wash your feet daily in warm water, using a moisturising wash. Don't soak them for more than ten minutes as this can reduce the natural oils of the foot, causing dry skin.

Make sure that you thoroughly dry your feet. Use tissues to dry between the toes by gently dabbing the area if your skin is fragile. This prevents grazing the skin and reduces the risk of fungal or bacterial infections.

If the skin between your toes appears white and moist use surgical spirit or witch hazel daily.

Remove hard skin by gently rubbing with a pumice stone or foot file. Avoid doing this if the hard skin is over a joint or bony area.

If your skin is dry, use a moisturising cream daily. Do not apply between the toes.

Keep your feet warm and take regular exercise. This helps with the circulation.

do not

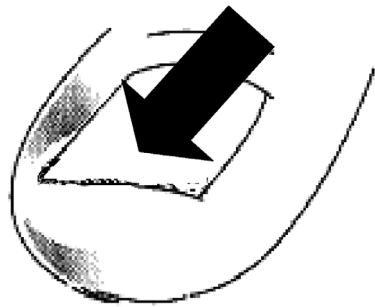
- Use sharp instruments such as razor blades to cut corns or hard skin
- Use corn paints/corn plasters which contain acid
- Use ingrowing toenail paints as these contain acid.

Care of the toenails

Correct nail care is important. Follow these steps to reduce the risk of problems.

When you cut your nails, use proper nail clippers. Cut straight across and not too short or down the corners, as this can lead to ingrowing nails.

A **safer** way is to file them. Use a foot file approximately twice a week and gently file in one direction down the end of your nails (away from yourself). This is particularly useful if your nails tend to be thickened.



Long-handled emery board files are ideal and can be purchased from many high street stores.

If you get discomfort from the sides of your nails due to build-up of dead skin, use a toothbrush or soft nailbrush to gently brush up the side (away from yourself). Rubbing in a little moisturising cream and brushing away can also help to keep the sides clear.

The safest way to reach your foot is to be seated on a chair, with your foot on a

towel-covered chair, opposite you. If you are able, bend your knee upwards, as this allows the foot to be closer to the body.



Footwear

It is important for good foot health to wear well fitting shoes. (See the leaflet 'Your shoes and you' for further information.)

The ideal shoe should fit the foot properly and be the correct width and length. It should have a broad heel and have a fastening (lace, buckle or Velcro).

Slippers offer little support or protection to the foot and become worn very quickly, and therefore can be dangerous. They are made from man-made materials, which encourage perspiration and do not stretch to fit the foot. They should never be tight fitting but, if worn, ideally should be of the bootie type with zip or Velcro fastening.

Always change your hosiery (tights or socks) daily. Cotton or wool are better than man-made fabrics as they allow for swelling and absorb perspiration.

About the service

People who attend the podiatry services have been referred by a health professional for a number of reasons.

This could be because they are 'at risk' from conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis or other debilitating illnesses that have affected their foot health.

It may be for footcare advice.

Patients may also self refer and these patients may be invited to a:

- Foot health talk
- Assessment appointment dependent on the reason for referral.

This leaflet aims to give simple, basic advice for good footcare for patients and their carers.

If you have any concerns please contact us; please note NHS Podiatry Services do not provide a routine toenail cutting service.

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

Tel 01302 379550

