

A Guide to Basic Foot Care

Podiatry & Orthotics Directorate

Hygiene:

- Wash feet every day and dry gently, especially between the toes.
- If the skin between the toes is moist apply surgical spirit.

Toe Nails:

- Cut the nails by following the shape of the toe.
- File the nails after cutting them to prevent any sharp corners or jagged edges.
- Never cut down into the corners of the nail, or poke down the sides as this can cause an ingrown toenail.

If you cannot bend to attend to your feet, ask a family member, friend or carer to help.

Corns and Callus:

These are accumulated layers of dead skin, which may be the result of pressure from foot deformity or badly fitting footwear.

- Gently rub hard skin with a file when the skin is dry.
- Apply a simple foot cream.

It is not advisable to use medicated corn pads or any of the over the counter remedies.

Hosiery:

- Natural fibres such as cotton or wool allow the feet to breathe.
- Ensure hosiery is not too tight, particularly if your legs and feet swell.
- Wear seamless socks or stockings

Athlete's Foot:

This is a fungal infection of the skin. Moisture and warmth and communal activity permit the spread of infection.

- Use an anti-fungal preparation which can be obtained from your Pharmacist.

Footwear:

It is important that your choice of footwear compliments your day to day lifestyle or work.

- Size: There should always be approximately 12mm (½") from the end of the longest toe to the end of the shoe.
- Width: Check there is sufficient depth in the toe box to accommodate your toes.
- Fastening: Choose either a lace or Velcro fastening over the instep to hold the foot firmly in the shoe.
- Insole: Check the footwear to see if the insole can be removed. This is helpful if you have been prescribed with insoles.
- Heel counter: The area enclosing the heel should be firm and offer support to the heel.
- Heel height: This should be no higher than 30mm. Avoid a narrow heel base
- Sole: This should provide good grip and shock absorption, but should not be over flexible.

Purchasing Footwear:

- If one foot is bigger than the other always buy for the bigger foot.
- If your feet are prone to swelling, try the footwear late in the day.
- Always wear socks or stockings with your footwear to maintain good foot hygiene.
- Where possible the uppers and linings of your shoes should be made from natural materials such as soft leather. This will reduce the chances of rubbing and sweating.
- New footwear should be broken/worn in gradually to reduce the chance of initial rubbing or discomfort.