

Skin Care for Feet

This leaflet is intended to provide simple practical information to help you keep your feet in good condition.

How do I check my feet?

Check the soles and tops of your feet and always check between your toes. Look for rubs, cuts scratches and any new areas of soreness. If you have trouble reaching your feet you can use a mirror or prop your foot up on a chair. If you can't do this ask a relative, friend or carer to help.

Foot Hygiene

Foot hygiene is important. Feet should be carefully washed daily in a bath or shower or it may be easier to use a wash bowl. Gently wash your feet with mild soap and warm water and dry thoroughly especially between the toes.

Socks should be changed daily to keep feet fresh and comfortable. Ensure they fit correctly and are not too tight.

Problems

Sweaty feet



If your skin tends to be sweaty or you do not dry thoroughly between your toes, the skin between your toes can become soggy, white and begin to peel.

After your daily wash, use a cotton bud / cotton wool with some surgical spirit. Allow the spirit to evaporate. Do not use surgical spirits if it 'stings'.

Red and itchy skin



Red and itchy skin between your toes may be caused by a fungal infection and can be treated by applying an anti-fungal spray or cream (available from the chemist or GP). This treatment should be applied for two weeks after the symptoms have cleared. Use an antifungal powder on hosiery and shoes to prevent reinfection.

Dry, cracked skin



Dry cracked skin needs moisturising daily. A moisturising cream such as E45 or a heel balm containing 25% urea e.g Flexitol should be applied 1-2 times daily.

Gently rub a pumice stone or file on hard skin then apply the cream.

Avoid putting cream between your toes.

Do not apply too much cream and let it soak in.

Avoid walking straight away as your feet may be slippery and you could fall.

Blisters



If skin blisters develop do not pop the blister. Cover it with a clean, dry dressing and check daily.

If the area becomes red, inflamed or any pustular discharge contact the podiatry department immediately.

If you are prone to blisters and intend to do a lot of walking, try rubbing surgical spirit over the skin for a few weeks beforehand to toughen it.

Hard skin (callus) Thick hard skin is just that; an area of skin that is thicker than usual and has become hard as a result. It is often yellowish in colour and can affect many parts of the foot such as the ball of foot, the heel and the toes.



Thick hard skin develops when there is excess force on the feet, such as pressure or friction – the body tries to protect itself from the pressure and friction by building up extra layers of skin. Thick hard skin will keep coming back unless the underlying cause of the pressure or friction on the feet is found and removed or treated.

Hard skin can be treated in the same way as dry cracked skin, by gently filing with a pumice or file and then applying a moisturising cream.

Footwear

Depth of toe box

The front part of the shoe needs to be deep enough not to press on the tops of the toes otherwise corns can occur. A stretchy soft front of the shoe may help.

Width of shoe/toe box

Narrow or pointed shoes squash your toes. Overtime this can cause callus, corns or damage to nerves.

Shoe length

The shoe should be the correct length for your foot. There should be a fingers width between the end of your longest toe and the end of your shoe.

Sole of the shoe

To give your feet some shock absorption buy shoes with thicker soles and soft insoles.

Fastening

A shoe needs to hold on to you and not you to it. Slip-on shoes hold on by fitting tightly round the toes and the foot muscles tense to keep the shoe on at the heel. Laces or Velcro allow the shoe to be fastened on the arch which allows enough space for your toes to function properly

You can search for other information leaflets on

www.feetforlife.org or www.patient.co.uk

It is recommended that you follow the advice in this leaflet and only contact the podiatry department should you need further advice about skin care.

Please contact the Podiatry Department on ☎ **(01803) 217712** if you:

--require further information

--require this leaflet in a different format

 TorbayAndSouthDevonFT

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PATIENT INFORMATION

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Department of Podiatry
and Foot Health