

# Healthy Feet

Taking care of your feet is crucial for everyone. Properly cared for feet can enhance comfort, mobility, confidence, independence, and significantly affect an individual's overall quality of life.

This healthy feet information leaflet explains how you can look after your own feet and some common problems you might notice that you can manage yourself. It also includes some signs to look out for that might require more specialist help from your Foot Health Practitioner.

## Personal Footcare

Following these simple steps you can maintain happy and healthy feet:



### 1. Checking your feet

You should check your feet daily. If you have diabetes you should get a healthcare professional to check your feet once a year, as part of your annual diabetes review. Your self-check should look for;

- **Cuts and bruises:** make sure you have no wounds, bleeding, redness and swelling
- **Colour:** both feet should be the same colour, not red/blue or purple which could be signs of poor circulation
- **Cracks:** you should not have any cracks or splits in your skin
- **Callus and corns:** keep your feet moisturised to prevent hard skin build up
- **Check between your toes:** they shouldn't be red, have any splits and be nice and moist
- **Changes:** have you noticed any change in your feet? pay particular attention to anything causing discomfort or pain

### 2. Washing your feet

Remember to wash your feet daily. To prevent dry skin, steer clear of hot water and harsh soaps. Be thorough by cleaning between your toes and ensuring your feet are completely dry, gently patting them instead of rubbing vigorously with a towel.

### 3. Skincare

- To combat dry skin, apply moisturising cream daily and gently massage it in using small circular motions. Remember to avoid applying cream between the toes.
- Feet naturally sweat, but excessive perspiration can lead to odours and moisture between the toes. Keep your feet clean by washing and drying them daily, and change into fresh socks every day.
- Use a foot file or a pumice stone to remove small areas of tough skin on your feet. Avoid attempting to cut corns or calluses on your own.

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## 4. Toenails

- To prevent ingrown toenails, trim your nails along their natural curve and avoid cutting down the sides. It is essential to never attempt to treat ingrown toenails yourself.
- If trimming your nails is challenging, use a nail file or emery board instead. Smooth out any rough edges and reduce the length.
- File thickened nails both in length and thickness.
- It's easier to file dry nails, maintain a weekly filing routine to help keep them at a suitable length.
- We suggest washing toenail clippers, foot files, and nail files with warm soapy water after each use.

## 5. Footwear

Footwear encompasses all items worn on the feet, such as socks, tights, shoes, and slippers.

- Choose appropriate shoes for the activity you are doing to ensure support, protection, and natural movement.
- Reserve high-heeled or pointed shoes for special occasions to limit discomfort.
- Opt for shoes that offer adequate support to prevent arch and heel pain.
- Avoid going barefoot outdoors and be cautious when wearing sandals that leave toes exposed to reduce the risk of injury.
- Prevent the spread of verrucae and athlete's foot by wearing flip flops in public showers and swimming pool areas.
- Rotate your shoes regularly instead of wearing the same pair daily.
- Opt for socks with a high content of natural materials like cotton, bamboo, or wool to allow sweat to evaporate from your skin. Ensure your socks fit properly, especially focusing on the width for your foot and ankle.
- For swollen feet, choose socks specifically designed to accommodate swelling. Look for elastic-free options to prevent them from cutting into your legs.
- If you have neuropathy and struggle with sensation in your feet, check for any rough seams inside the socks that could cause irritation and harm the skin. Turning socks inside out can help reduce friction and prevent rubbing.

## 6. Footcare advice and seeking assistance

In addition to adhering to our tips for maintaining healthy feet, there are other important factors that can help you stay active without pain.



Avoid sitting cross legged as this will reduce circulation to your feet.



DO NOT SMOKE! This will further reduce blood circulation.



If in doubt ALWAYS seek professional help and do not attempt to self treat, you could make your foot problems worse.