

## Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment, please let us know by speaking to a member of staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information you provide to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm or email [Ich.pet@nhs.net](mailto:Ich.pet@nhs.net)

## Contact us

### Podiatry Service

2/F Stockdale House  
Headingley Office Park  
Victoria Road  
Leeds LS6 1PF  
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm  
Tel: 0113 84 30730

**We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.**

# Foot ulcers and foot wounds



## What is a foot ulcer?

An ulcer is a wound that is not healing as expected. Wounds and ulcers can be painful and sometimes ooze clear fluid or pus.

## What is a wound?

A wound is any break in the skin.

## Common causes:

There are many causes (risk factors) such as:

- poor footwear
- complications of diabetes
- loss of fatty padding on the feet
- loss of feeling (neuropathy)
- poor circulation (peripheral arterial disease)
- self-treatment e.g. medicated corn plasters or use of sharp implements
- foot structure e.g. hammer toes or bunions

## What can you do for yourself?

- Eat a well-balanced diet, including protein and a variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Maintain good blood glucose control if you have diabetes.
- If you smoke, try to reduce the number you smoke or consider giving up.
- If you drink alcohol regularly, try to reduce your intake.

## When to get professional advice:

If you experience any of the following contact your podiatrist, doctor or nurse immediately:

- An ulcer or wound to the foot
- Any new pain or throbbing
- More swelling in the affected area
- Colour changes surrounding the ulcer e.g. redness or blackness
- More discharge or smell from the ulcer
- An increase of heat and warmth in the affected area
- Generally feeling unwell with a raised temperature (38C or above) or nausea.

## Treatment

If you need regular treatment to help your foot ulcer to heal we will work out a plan with you which might include some or all of the things listed here:

- Removing dead skin- ulcers sometimes hide under hard skin and can gather dead tissue around them, so dead skin needs to be removed regularly. This might cause slight bleeding which is completely normal.
- Antimicrobial and protective dressings – these might change during your treatment.
- Regular change of dressings - the podiatrist will show you how to change your dressing if you're able to do this yourself. We'll make other arrangements if you can't do this yourself
- Referral to other NHS specialists.
- Wearing special boots or sandals if you can't wear your own shoes. Some patients may be referred to an orthotist for specialist footwear.

**Further information:** [www.scpod.org](http://www.scpod.org)