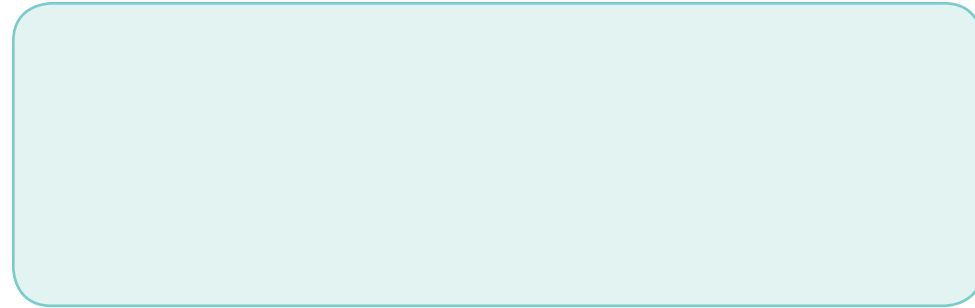


Personal advice



Contact us:

Leeds Community Podiatry Department
2nd Floor, Stockdale House
Victoria Road
Leeds LS6 1PF
Tel: 0113 843 0730

Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information 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 9.30am to 4.30pm or email Ich.pet@nhs.net

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

References

Assessment of the Lower Limb. L. Merriman & D. Tollafeld. Churchill Livingstone.
Neal's Disorders of the Foot: Diagnosis & Management. D. Lorimer, G. French, M. O'Donnell, G. Burrow. Churchill Livingstone

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Leeds Community Podiatry Service



A Guide to Healthy Feet

Proper foot care is essential to maintain healthy feet and should be as much a part of your daily routine as brushing your teeth.

It is essential that your feet are looked after regularly if they are to stay healthy. This leaflet explains why it is important to care for your own feet and also contains useful advice on what you can do to improve your foot health.

Foot hygiene

- Feet should be washed on a daily basis with soap and warm water, then dried thoroughly. You should pay particular attention between the toes.
- Do not soak feet for long periods of time as this can dry the skin by removing the natural oils.
- Change socks or stockings daily for comfort and to reduce the risk of infection.
- Check hosiery / socks fit comfortably, and are not too tight.



Nail care

Nails protect the end of the toes. If neglected, they can become uncomfortable or damaged. Good nail care can reduce this risk.

Please follow this simple advice on how to care for your nails.

- Cut nails after bathing or shower as they will be softer
- Find a comfortable position. Try sitting on a low seat or with your leg on the bed. Take your time - you may wish to trim a few nails at a time and spread the task out.
- Cut or file nails following the natural shape of the toe.
- Most nails could be cut with nail clippers. However, you may wish to purchase nippers and a file.
- If nails are thick, try filing with an emery board or nail file on a weekly basis.
- To maintain good healthy nails, do not cut nails too short, do not cut down the sides, pick or pull the nails.
- Do not use equipment which is not for this purpose i.e. knife or razor blades.
- If you experience difficulty, ask a friend, relative or carer for help.

Cleaning sides of nails

While bathing or using a foot bath use a soft toothbrush to clean down the sides of nails. Olive oil may help to soften dry skin in this area.

It is advisable to purchase nippers and files from your pharmacist / chemist or mail order companies. See end of this leaflet.



Skin care advice

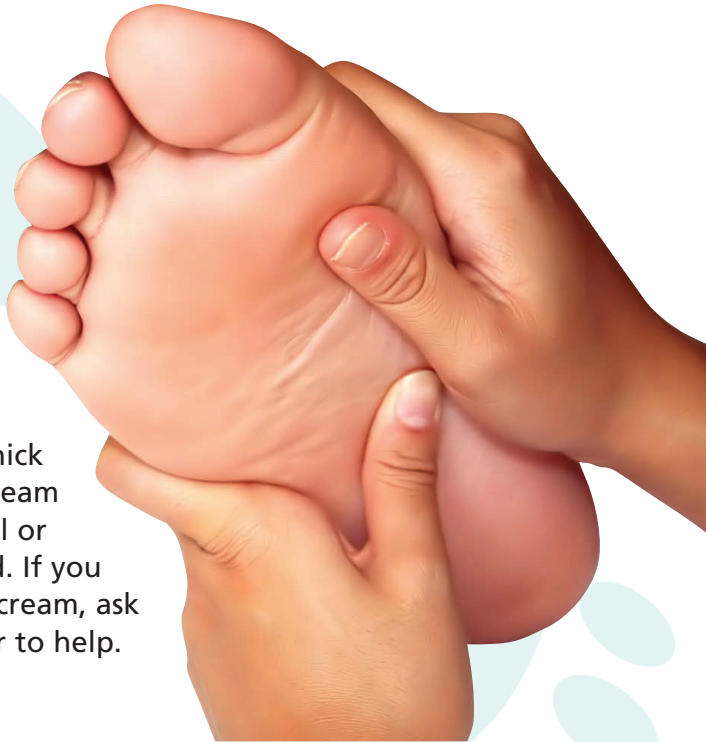
Dry skin

Can present on your feet as areas of flaking, rough or cracked skin that may become painful if left untreated.

Moisturisers help to keep skin supple and soft. They help to stop callus from becoming painful.

It is advisable to apply a moisturiser at least once a day, after bathing if possible. Do not apply between the toes.

Moisturisers should be thoroughly massaged into the skin before putting hosiery on. Creams such as E45 and Aqueous Cream can be used. If your skin is thick and dry a UREA based cream such as Calmurid, Flexitol or Dermatonics can be used. If you have difficulty applying cream, ask a friend, relative or carer to help.



Moist skin

Appears mostly between the toes. It is white and spongy in appearance and can peel off leaving the area raw and red. It is usually caused by inadequate drying in between toes though in some people it may be caused by excess perspiration or infection.

Ensure you wash and dry your feet thoroughly. Applying surgical spirit sparingly to any areas of moist skin, e.g. between toes can help improve the condition of your skin.

Corns and callus

- Corns and Callus usually form over areas of high pressure on the foot and are usually associated with structural problems.
- Ill-fitting footwear / hosiery can contribute to its development.
- It can appear as an area of thick, dry, hard yellow skin.
- On occasions callus may be caused, or made worse, by a medical condition.

What should I do about my corns and callus?

Choose footwear with a wide / deep toe box to avoid putting pressure on your feet and toes.

Remember not all callus requires treatment. If you have diabetes or have poor circulation you should seek advice.

Use a pumice stone or emery board followed by a moisturiser. This can help reduce the amount of callus formation.

What should I NOT do?

- Attempt to cut corns or callus with sharp instruments like razors or scissors, as this may lead to bleeding or infection.
- Use corn or callus preparations especially if you have diabetes or have problems with your circulation.

If you have painful hard skin and corns or problems with the structure of your feet you may wish to consult a podiatrist (chiropodist).

Blisters

Blisters are painful, fluid-filled lesions, often caused by friction and pressure. They can be caused by:

- Ill-fitting shoes
- Stiff shoes
- Wrinkled socks against the skin
- Excessive moisture
- Foot deformities



How to prevent blisters:

- Keep your feet dry
- Always wear socks as they act as a cushion between your feet and shoes
- Wear properly fitting shoes

If a blister does occur, cover with a protective dressing.



Exercises

Simple exercises to help maintain foot mobility and circulation.

- Circle your feet ten times in each direction, keeping your legs as still as possible
- Consciously straighten your toes then wiggle them around
- Raise, point and curl your toes for five seconds each, repeated ten times – this is particularly good for toe cramps or hammer toes.

Useful tips

Swollen feet / legs

If your feet or legs are swollen, try placing them, for some part of each day, on a footstool. Alternatively you may wish to lay down with your legs slightly raised.

Useful sources of footcare products and further advice

Your local chemist or supermarket will stock a range of foot care products such as specialist creams for dry skin, files for hard skin.

Simply Feet
www.simplyfeet.co.uk
0845 370 0380

Toe and Foot Solutions
Tel / fax: 01484 714 789 (products only)

Scholl
www.scholl.co.uk

Dreamy Feet
www.dreamyfeet.co.uk
0845 519 8929

Foot Care Supplies
www.footcaresupplies.com
0845 230 0770

Feet for Life
www.feetforlife.org (advice only)

For further advice

Consult a podiatrist. We recommend practitioners who are registered with the Health Professions Council – www.hcpc-uk.org