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## Looking after your feet

## A guide for patients and their carers

### Feedback

We welcome any suggestions you have, please send your **comments, concerns, complaints and compliments** to: **PALS, complaints and incidents team**, Trust Headquarters Redesmere, Countess of Chester Health Park, Liverpool Road, Chester CH2 1BQ.

For more information see [www.cwp.nhs.uk](http://www.cwp.nhs.uk)

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### Why should I look after my feet?

Looking after your feet will help to maintain good foot health and can prevent problems occurring later in life. As we get older, 75% of us will have problems with our feet so it is good to know how to look after them.

Looking after the feet is important to help prevent problems occurring as illnesses like diabetes are more likely to adversely affect feet that are in poor condition.

### How can I look after my feet?

Many foot problems can be prevented or greatly improved by making some simple but effective changes to your lifestyle. Follow these tips for good foot health:

- Wash your feet daily in warm soapy water. Don't soak them for too long as this might destroy the natural oils that keep the skin healthy.
- Dry thoroughly especially between the toes as otherwise they tend to stay moist which can irritate and cause the skin to break down.
- If your skin is dry apply a moisturising cream all over the foot except for between the toes as this area is already quite moist.
- Gently remove hard skin with a pumice stone or foot file.
- Trim your toenails regularly using proper nail clippers. Cut the nails straight across; not too short and not down the edges or into the corners as this can lead to ingrowing toenails. File any rough edges.
- If you are unable to cut your toenails or you are worried about hurting yourself then it might be easier for you to regularly file them. If it is difficult to do them all in one go then spread the task over several days. Perhaps a family member, friend or carer could do this for you.

### Is there anything else I can do?

- Try to keep your feet warm but don't cook them in front of the fire.
- Wearing thermal underwear, socks or stockings in the cold weather can help as can fleece lined boots or shoes or an extra pair of socks.
- Always avoid wearing anything too tight that could restrict your circulation or cramp your toes.
- Bed socks are also a good idea.
- Maintaining a good weight for your height will help you to remain active and put less strain on your knees and feet.
- Exercise your feet by bending and flexing your ankles and toes.
- Never sit with your legs crossed at the ankles or knees as this will also restrict your circulation.

### What about shoes?

Always shop at a store with trained staff to advise you. The right footwear will hold your foot firmly in place providing adequate support. Slippers or similar shoes will make you unstable when you walk and could cause you to trip over and hurt yourself. Remember a bigger size may only give you extra length.

Make sure your shoes are broad and deep enough. Narrow and shallow shoes put pressure on the toes by squeezing them together and squashing them down. This can cause painful corns on the tops, sides and in between toes.

Always wear shoes that fit you correctly as many adult foot problems occur because of shoes that are too small, too big or badly made.

### Is there anything else I should know?

As we get older our feet naturally develop more problems; our skin tends to become thinner, lose its elasticity and healing can take longer. Wear and tear to the joints may also cause some arthritis and pain.

Foot problems can impact on your general health and well-being so don't ignore foot pain. Persistent pain and soreness can make you walk awkwardly which can lead to back, hip or knee problems. If you are concerned that something is wrong seek medical advice.

### I have heard that diabetes can affect the feet, is this true?

Certain medical conditions like diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and circulatory problems can have a direct effect on your foot health and it is important that you or someone checks your feet regularly and you should always seek medical advice if you are having problems with your feet.

Podiatry Service Administration Office  
Room 65 1829 Building  
Countess of Chester Health Park  
Liverpool Road  
Chester CH2 1HJ

Call 01244 385000 Mon – Fri 9.00am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 4.00pm

Visit [www.cwp.nhs.uk](http://www.cwp.nhs.uk) for more information.

**People who access our services are welcome to talk to the Team Manager if they are experiencing any problems with their care.**