



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Therapy Services Fact Sheet

General Foot Care

Foot Care Facts

As we age, the ability to attend to our feet can become increasingly difficult resulting in unhygienic and problematic feet. Thickened nails, ingrown nails and fungal skin and nail infections are just some of the common problems that may be present causing difficulty maintaining good feet. It is important to regularly visit a podiatrist who can check the condition of your feet and nails.

Toenails

Self-cutting techniques: nails should be cut straight across with the edges filed. Cutting into the corners should be avoided as it may result in injury. If injury occurs it should be dressed with antiseptic and covered. Consultation by either your GP or Podiatrist may be required. For some individuals, nails should only be cut by a podiatrist, for example, people with Diabetes.

Corns and Callouses

Extra pressure on some areas of the feet can result in thickened skin (callouses and corns) as a means of protection. However, when the skin becomes excessively thick due to continuance of this pressure, pain can result. In some cases, breakage of the underlying skin may occur resulting in an ulcer. It is important to reduce calluses and corns with the help of a podiatrist and with self-care measures. Measures to reduce callous and corn build-up include:

- The use of a pumice stone - please ask your Podiatrist for more information.
- Shoes that fit properly.

- Regular moisturiser use, such as sorbelene (or similar product).
- Specific paddings (as recommended by your podiatrist).
- Medicated corn pads are not recommended as they can cause damage to the surrounding healthy skin.

Hygiene

Feet should have nails that are free of dirt and good skin integrity, especially between the toes where moisture may be trapped. This can occur through inadequate ventilation, which may cause the skin to break, destroying the protective barrier against micro-organisms like tinea.

Tips include:

- Washing feet regularly to remove excess bacteria and dirt, especially between the toes
- Drying well between toes using a clean towel and applying methylated spirits if needed to reduce moisture build-up. If the skin has split, it is important to follow with antiseptic use. Foot powders should be avoided, as they can be abrasive.
- Regular application of moisturiser to feet (avoiding between the toes). Recommendations include sorbolene (or similar) for mild dryness and specific richer creams (e.g. eulactol or similar) for severe dryness (your Podiatrist will advise you).

As this is merely a guide, it is advisable that you contact your Podiatrist for further information.