

## Self-care for your feet

It is important to take care of your feet.

Check them every day, care for them properly, and wear proper footwear. You should also avoid doing things that could damage your feet.

### Foot checks

Check your feet every day for:

- blisters
- breaks in the skin
- pain
- any signs of infection, such as swelling, heat, or redness.

If you can't do this yourself, ask your partner or carer to help you.

If you discover any breaks in the skin, minor cuts or blisters:

- cover the area with a sterile dressing
- contact your podiatrist or GP immediately
- go to your local after-hours clinic if it is after hours, and there's no sign of healing after one day.

### Foot care

Wash your feet every day:

- Use warm water and mild soap.
- You may not be able to feel hot or cold temperatures very well. Test the temperature of the water with your elbow or ask someone else to test the temperature for you.
- Rinse your feet thoroughly. Don't soak your feet, as this may damage your skin.
- Dry them carefully, especially between your toes.

If your skin is dry, apply a moisturising cream every day. Avoid the areas between your toes.

Change your socks, stockings, or tights every day. Choose ones without bulky seams and elasticised tops.

Wear socks if your feet are cold.

Always remove hot water bottles or heating pads from your bed before getting in.





### Shoes

Wear well-fitting shoes. Your podiatrist may advise you about your shoes, buying new shoes, or getting prescription shoes.

Before you put on shoes, check the bottom to make sure that nothing sharp has pierced the outer sole. Run your hand inside each shoe to check that no small objects such as small stones have fallen in.

If your podiatrist or orthotist (the person who makes the shoes) has supplied you with prescription shoes:

- follow the instructions they give you
- only wear these shoes
- only remove insoles if your orthotist or podiatrist advises you to.

Whoever provided your shoes will repair or alter them so they match your prescription.

### Things to avoid

Don't cut your toenails unless your podiatrist advises you to.

Avoid high or low temperatures.

Avoid walking barefoot, as you could stub your toes or stand on sharp objects.

Don't wear badly fitting shoes.

Don't burst blisters.

Don't try to remove hard skin or corns yourself. Your podiatrist can provide treatment and advice.

Don't use over-the-counter corn remedies, as they can damage your skin and cause ulcers.

Don't sit with your feet in front of a fire or heater to warm them up.

*Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Page created July 2019.*