

Foot care: What can I do to keep my feet healthy?

Wash and dry your feet

Washing your feet every day is important to keep skin healthy and reduce the risk of skin infections. Wash them in warm (not hot!) water with mild soap and be sure to dry them properly, paying special attention to the area between your toes.

When the toes are a bit stiff and it is difficult to clean between them, try using a wet wipe to clean and a thin flannel to dry.

Nail care

Keeping toenails maintained is important because when toe nails become too long they can cause pain, pressure on the skin and can sometimes break, increasing the risk of wounds and infection. Toenails that have been poorly cut can also become ingrown.

It is important, if you can no longer maintain your own toe nails, that you seek help to keep them short. If you have a medical need, such as moderate or high risk diabetic foot status, are taking medication that will increase your risk of heavy bleeding or have a medical concern that might delay your risk of healing, such as vascular disease or rheumatoid arthritis, you may be eligible for NHS care. Where there is no medical need, but you find it difficult to manage, you can ask for support from your family or carer or you can use services provided by AGE UK or private providers.

Skin care

Check your skin every day, and where you notice anything that concerns you, see a health care professional for advice.

A foot file or pumice stone can be used to gently rub over any areas of hard skin. You may wish to refer to our callus and corns advice sheet.

Creaming feet daily, with an appropriate foot cream and not a body lotion, will help keep your skin soft and in good condition. Very dry skin can be at risk of cracking, increasing the risk of pain and infection.

Aim to cream your feet once a day, twice a day if your feet are very dry. It is important not to apply cream between your toes, as this can make this area fragile, increasing the risk of the skin opening or becoming infected.



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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