

A guide from the Podiatry Service

## Basic foot care advice and safe nail cutting

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**As we are sure you will understand, we are trying our best to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This means that some of our services may be affected.**

We hope this information will help you care for your feet at home, however, If you have any concerns or need further advice then please contact us, using the details at the end of this advice sheet.

### Foot care basics

Good hygiene is important for foot health. You should:

- wash your feet every day in warm soapy water
- dry your feet carefully, especially between the toes, using your own towel
- use a moisturising cream to soften the skin. Avoid putting cream in-between your toes as this may cause the area to be too moist
- change socks, tights or stockings daily
- wear different shoes every other day. Shoes absorb a lot of moisture from your feet and need time to dry out

Don't soak your feet for any longer than five minutes as this reduces the skin's natural oils and will make the feet too dry.

Check your feet daily. You should look for any breaks in the skin, blisters, change in skin colour or signs of infection such as swelling, redness, heat or pain. Don't forget to check in-between the toes, where moist skin can cause splits. A mirror can be helpful or if you have difficulty, ask a friend, relative or carer to help – while following the Government guidelines about Coronavirus (COVID-19). If you do notice anything that concerns you, please contact us or your GP.

### Callus and hard skin

You may file hard skin with a file or pumice stone two to three-times-a-week.

Use moisturiser daily. Moisturisers with an ingredient called *urea* is recommended for callus and is safe for diabetics to use.

Please do not use sharp blades, corn knives or scissors, as you may seriously injure yourself or cause an infection. We also do not recommend using corn plasters, hard skin removing ointments or creams, as they contain an acid that may injure your foot or cause an infection.

### Nail cutting

When cutting your nails, always make sure you wash your hands before and after and sit in a well-lit room.

Using clean nail scissors or clippers, gently cut your nails straight across or follow the shape of your toe. Make sure you leave some of the white of the nail showing to avoid cutting too low.

Don't cut or dig down the sides of the nail as you may cause an infection or an ingrown nail.

You may find nails are softer and easier to cut after a bath or shower. Make sure you thoroughly dry your feet and toes thoroughly and before you go onto filing.

Use a file to gently go across the nails to remove any sharp edges. You can also file down thick nails with an emery or metal file. Filing can also be helpful if you find it difficult to use the clippers and it can sometimes be a safer option.

### Online resources

If you have access to the internet there are some videos on YouTube, which you may find helpful. Please note these have been produced by other NHS organisations.

- Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust: Search 'Podiatry nail trimming advice' on YouTube.
- Worcestershire County Council: Search 'How To Cut Your Toenails - Podiatrist's View' on YouTube.
- Nottinghamshire Healthcare: Search 'Podiatry Treatment: Filing your Nails' on YouTube.

### Pressure sores

Pressure sores can quickly develop if you are staying in one place for long periods of time. Make sure you are changing your position regularly throughout the day and elevate your heels where possible. Eat well and make sure you are drinking plenty of fluid.

### Contact us

If you have any concerns, please contact us. If you are showing any signs of an infection, please also contact your GP.

**Phone:** 0300 123 6756, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

**Email:**

kentchft.podiatrydgs@nhs.net (children only)

kentchft.podiatryeastkent@nhs.net

kentchft.podiatrynorthkent@nhs.net

kchft.podiatrywestkent@nhs.net

## Do you have feedback about our health services?

**Phone:** 0300 123 1807

8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

**Text:** 07899 903499

**Email:** kentchft.PALS@nhs.net

**Web:** www.kentcht.nhs.uk/PALS

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

Unit J, Concept Court

Shearway Business Park

Folkestone

Kent CT19 4RG

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