Basic foot care

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

Nail care

- The safest way to care for your nails is to file them regularly with an emery board, smoothing off any sharp edges.
- If the nails need to be cut, sit in a comfortable position, well balanced and in good light. It is much easier if a carer, partner or relative can cut them for you.
- Use a pair of nail clippers (scissors can be dangerous as they slip easily). Cut each nail straight across so that the nail is level with the end of the toe and no shorter. Finish off by filing the nails smooth.
- Cutting down the sides of the nail can often leave hidden spikes of nail. These can become painful and infected and result in ingrowing toenails.

Skin care

- You should wash your feet every day in warm soapy water and dry thoroughly especially between the toes.
- If your skin is dry, apply a moisturising cream to the tops and soles of your feet, but not between the toes.
- If the skin between the toes is very damp, you can use a cotton bud to dab the area with surgical spirit.
- If you have hard skin on your feet, this can be reduced by gently filing the area with an emery board and then applying moisturiser.

Socks, stockings and tights

- You should change your socks, stockings or tights every day.
- They should not cut into the skin.
Footwear

Incorrectly fitting shoes can apply too much pressure to feet causing problems.

- Try to shop for shoes in the afternoon when feet are at their largest.
- Take your time buying shoes and make sure you stand in them and walk around the shop.
- Shoes should have a sufficient gap in front of the longest toe.
- Your toes should not feel cramped in a shoe or cause a bulge in the side or touch the top of the shoe.
- Shoes should have a low, wide heel to form a stable platform.
- Shoes should have a fastening of lace up, Velcro or straps to hold the foot secure. If your feet swell during the day, this can then be adjusted.

When should I contact the podiatry department?

Please contact us if you have the following:

- Pain / throbbing
- Redness / inflammation / swelling
- Discharge
- A wound
- Colour change to the foot

Further information

If you seek private treatment, we recommend that you ensure the podiatrist or chiropodist is registered with Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

North Devon Podiatry Services
Email: ndht.podiatry@nhs.net
Tel: 01271 341509
Address: North Devon Podiatry Services, Barnstaple Health Centre, Vicarage Street, Barnstaple, North Devon, EX32 7BH
Useful websites:
www.feetforlife.org
www.hcpc-uk.co.uk

PALS
The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of the ward staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

‘Care Opinion’ comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.