

## First Aid Measures

- Clean wounds with some tepid salty tap water using ordinary table salt
- Minor cuts and abrasions should be covered with a clean, sterile non-adherent dressing. Never place adhesive strapping directly over a wound. Suitable dressings can be bought from any Chemist and it is advisable to keep a supply at home. Never use cotton wool to clean or dress wounds
- Cool any burns with cold water for 10 minutes. Afterwards cover the area with a non-adherent sterile dressing and seek medical attention
- Do not wrap adhesive tape or bandages completely around a toe
- Do not “prick” blisters, if they burst dress, them as above
- If in any doubt contact your podiatrist, doctor, nurse, or the Emergency Department (A&E) or Diabetes Centre at your nearest hospital. NHS 111 Service: Call 111 if you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency

If you have any questions regarding the information in this leaflet, please contact Podiatry Services.

Further information about the service and how to manage a range of foot health problems yourself, can also be found on our website: [www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/project/podiatry](http://www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/project/podiatry)

## Contact Details

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## Podiatry Services Patient Information Leaflet



## Foot Care Advice for Patients Who Have Peripheral Neuropathy

(March 2023)

Everyday advice about how to care for your feet and prevent common foot problems

## What is Peripheral Neuropathy?

Peripheral neuropathy occurs as a result of damage to the nerves in the extremities. There are over one hundred different causes of peripheral neuropathy and the symptoms can vary according to the type of nerve affected and its location. Numbness, pain and muscle weakness are the symptoms most commonly reported in the early stages of neuropathy.

Paresthesia is the term used to describe sensations such as tingling, burning, pins and needles, “electric shocks” and coldness that you may experience with neuropathy, especially at night.

Neuropathy may lead to loss of sensation in the hands, feet and lower legs similar to the area covered by gloves and stockings. Some people can find walking difficult due to weakness in their leg muscles which become tired easily and this can result in frequent tripping.

If you have neuropathy this can leave you at risk of injuring your feet without realising it because you have a loss of, or diminished sensation. If you do not monitor your feet this could result in foot ulcers.

## Basic Foot Care

Make sure you inspect your feet once a day. Use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet if necessary or ask your partner, carer or a friend to help.

## What to Look For

- A noticeable colour change in the leg or foot
- Any discharge from a break or crack in the skin or beneath a toenail
- Any swelling or throbbing in any part of the foot
- A part of the foot which is much hotter than normal
- Blistering or any other wounds
- Red streaks running up the foot or leg

Remember serious consequences can be avoided if injury or infection is noticed early and treated promptly. See over the page for first aid tips.

## Hygiene

- Wash your feet daily
- Test the temperature of the water with your elbow before putting your feet in
- Avoid soaking the feet for long periods
- Dry gently and carefully paying particular attention to in between the toes
- Cream can be applied to dry skin on heels or on side of feet

## Footwear

It is important shoes or slippers are worn at all times to prevent damage to the feet. It is better for your feet to wear well-fitting shoes with a fastening rather than slippers. Contact details are provided on the back page if you wish to request a copy of our Footwear Advice Leaflet.

- Never walk barefoot and avoid wearing sandals which leave the toes and heels exposed and at risk of injury
- Check inside shoes for loose objects
- When buying shoes try to have your feet measured and fitted by a qualified shoe fitter as lack of sensation can make it difficult to judge a proper fit
- New shoes should only be worn for an hour or two to begin with. Check your feet regularly for any sores or blisters

## Heat and Cold

- Beware of temperatures which are too hot or cold and may damage the feet
- Never sit too close to fires or heaters or put feet directly onto hot water bottles
- Always remove hot water bottles before getting into bed
- Remember to use sun block on the feet during the summer or on holiday and do wear shoes to protect feet from hot sand on the beach