

Caring for your feet on holiday

Information & advice for self-care

Note: If you are diabetic or are on immunosuppressant medication(s), please discuss this with your podiatrist or GP so they can advise you accordingly.

Why should I be worried about my feet while on holiday?

Due to your diabetes, your feet are at risk of developing problems. This risk can sometimes increase while you are on holiday.

When you are on holiday, your routine and environment change and you may be more active than usual, which can put your feet at increased risk of developing problems which can become serious.

If you discover a small blister or a cut, graze or any break in the skin on your feet, cover them with a sterile dressing. Do not burst blisters.

This leaflet contains advice to help you care for your feet yourself whilst enjoying your holiday.

What can I do to reduce my risk of developing problems?

On the journey

Long journeys can make your feet swell. Try to walk about every half hour if possible; even a short distance will help. This will keep swelling down. Remember your feet may swell in the heat, so make sure your shoes are not too tight.

Check your feet every day

You should check your feet at least once a day for any blisters, breaks in the skin, pain or any signs of infection such as swelling, heat or redness, just as you would at home.



Skin care for your feet

You should wash your feet regularly in warm water and with a mild soap. Rinse them thoroughly and dry them carefully, especially between the toes. Do not soak your feet as this can damage your skin.

If your skin is dry, apply a moisturising cream, avoiding the areas between your toes. You may need to apply extra moisturising cream if your skin gets very dry in hot or cold weather.

Toenail care

Carry on cutting your toenails as your podiatrist has advised you to.

Avoid walking barefoot

Always wear footwear, even on the beach. The sand can become very warm and you may burn your feet without realising it. If you go into the sea, wear some sort of footwear such as plastic shoes to protect your feet. Avoid wearing 'flip-flop' type footwear as this may cause blisters between your toes.

Prescription shoes

If you have been supplied with prescribed shoes, do not wear any other shoes during your holiday (except when you are in the sea).

Minor cuts and blisters

Make a small first-aid kit containing sterile gauze dressings and micropore tape. If you get a small blister, cut or graze, use diluted antiseptic on a gauze swab to clean the wound and tape on a dry sterile gauze dressing. Do not use cotton wool.

Medications and prescriptions

Make sure that you pack any antibiotic prescriptions, dressings, insoles and footwear that have been prescribed and issued to you.

If you smoke, you are strongly advised to stop. Smoking affects your circulation and can increase the risk of amputation.

Avoid high or low temperatures

Protect your feet from sunburn with a high-factor sun-protection cream (factor 30 or above) or keep them covered. Do not use dark-coloured materials to protect your feet, as they absorb heat and you could burn your feet.

If you have any concerns or discover any problems with your feet, contact the podiatry clinic or GP for advice immediately.

What should I do if I have a concern or a problem with my feet?

It is important that you check your feet regularly, especially when on holiday, as you may be more active than usual.

If you develop any of the following problems, it is important that you seek medical advice immediately, as any delay can have serious life- and limb-threatening consequences:

- A red, hot or swollen toe or foot
- A new break or wound in the skin
- New redness or discolouration of your toe or foot
- New or unexplained pain in your foot

When you get home, you must report it to your multidisciplinary footcare team, local podiatry department or GP within 24 hours.

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Produced by the Scottish Diabetes - Foot Action Group This leaflet is for all people with a diagnosis of diabetes, including children over the age of 12.

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would welcome your feedback on this leaflet. Please send it to the College of Podiatry at contact@cop.org.uk

Compliments, concerns or complaints

PALS may be the best starting point if you have a question or concern. If you would like to find an NHS dentist, know where your nearest doctor is or talk through a problem you have had with a service, you can contact the PALS service.

Tel: 01502 445447

Email: ECCH.patientliaison@nhs.net

Or write to:

PALS, East Coast Community Healthcare,
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road,
Lowestoft, NR32 1DE

This content was produced by the College of Podiatry. Find out more:

<https://cop.org.uk/common-foot-problems>



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