

What should I do next?

Even if you don't have exactly the symptoms described in this leaflet, if you have any concerns about the condition of your legs or feet you should have them professionally assessed. In the first instance, speak to your doctor, nurse or local Leg Club, who will give you a thorough examination. This may include a full health check and review of the circulation in your legs.

What is a Leg Club?

Leg Clubs are a research-based initiative which provide community-based treatment, health promotion, education and ongoing care for people of all age groups who are experiencing leg-related problems.

The Leg Club nursing teams are employed by NHS local provider services, CCGs and GP consortia and the nurses incorporate the Leg Clubs into their everyday practice.

No appointment is required and the Leg Club opening hours should be available from the local surgery, community nurses' office, and adverts in the local parish magazine and village shops or from the Leg Club website www.legclub.org

Through education, ongoing advice and support from your Leg Club nurses, you will be made aware that care and prevention of recurrence of leg-related problems is for life.

Visit your nearest Leg Club

The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation
Ipswich, PO Box 689, IP1 9BN

Telephone

01473 749565

Email:

lynn.bullock@legclubfoundation.com

www.legclub.org

Skin and Foot Related Care

Skin and foot related care



The Leg Club title, wording and logo are protected by registered trademark in the UK. Registered Charity No. 1111259 www.legclub.org
Designed by Boothman Design



The skin

As we get older, we are more likely to experience foot-related problems, such as corns, blisters or infections. Skin changes also occur with age. Skin becomes thinner, dryer and less elastic. There may be a loss of underlying tissue. However, regardless of age, you can prevent problems by taking care of your feet. If you have difficulty bending, use a handheld mirror to look at the bottoms of your feet to ensure that you do not have small cuts, blisters, or ingrown toenails. If you have diabetes, you may lose some feeling in your feet, so be sure to check your feet every day and feel inside your shoes in case any small objects are there that could cause damage.

Wearing correct shoes

Wearing comfortable shoes that fit well can prevent many foot problems — remember, as we get older, our foot size and shape may change. The best time to try shoes on is at the end of the day when your feet may have swollen. The following points should also be considered:

- Most of us have one foot that is larger than the other, so make sure that your shoes fit the larger foot.
- Always try shoes on as sizes can vary depending on the kind, make, and style.
- Walk in the shoes to make sure that they feel right and do not slide up and down.
- Stand up when trying on shoes to make sure that there is about 1/2 inch between your toe and the end of the shoe.
- Always make sure the ball of your foot fits comfortably into the widest part of the shoe.
- Do not buy shoes that feel too tight in the hope that they will stretch.
- The upper part of the shoes should be made of a soft, flexible material.
- Soles should give solid footing and not slip, cushioning your feet when walking on hard surfaces.
- Low-heeled shoes are more comfortable, safer, and less damaging than high-heeled shoes.

Skin and foot care: a few basic steps

To help remove dead skin cells, emollients can be added to water or rubbed into the dry skin in the form of creams or ointments. Products applied to the foot, ankle and lower limb should be simple and chemical-free. This is particularly important for skin that is already sensitised or damaged.



It is essential to inspect the feet and skin regularly – especially for people with diabetes. Washing feet provides the opportunity to carry out the following:

- Check the heel for hard skin, cracks or fissures. These can be painful and a focus for infection.
- Check areas prone to pressure damage, which are common in patients with rheumatoid arthritis and may also be seen in those with diabetes.
- For people who have difficulty reaching their feet, it is common to find a build-up of dead skin between the toes. This can easily become softened and be a focus for fungal or bacterial infection. Cleanse with a piece of gauze between each toe, stroking in a downward movement to remove the build-up of debris. Repeat with a clean piece of gauze to ensure the area is dry. Refrain from using talcum powder between the toes. Talcum powder absorbs fluid and forms a paste that may promote tissue maceration.

For more information on prevention and treatment, please visit: www.feetforlife.org

- Toenails that are too long can cause damage to the skin of the foot and lower leg, particularly while asleep. It is common for people with poor blood flow to the heart to experience itching in the mid-calf area, and they may rub this area with the opposite foot for relief during the night. Good advice for people who may be waiting for treatment for their feet is to wear socks during the night to prevent accidental skin tissue damage.
- Yellow or thick nails are common in the elderly — the big toe is often affected. Fungal nail infections may be suspected if the nails are brittle, crumbly and yellow-orange or grey in colour.
- Observe for hard skin and corns, which often develop under or between the metatarsal head area of the ball of the foot.

How to look after your feet

- Wash with mild soap and water daily and avoid soaking.
- Cut toenails to the shape of the end of the toes.
- Dry carefully especially between the toes.
- Wear cotton or wool socks and avoid synthetic materials.
- Have your shoes measured.
- Wear shoes that have a lace or strap.
- Wear shoes with 'breathable' materials.
- Wear shoes that are shock absorbable e.g trainers.
- Examine your feet regularly and use a mirror to examine the soles of your feet.
- Have a check up with a HCPC registered podiatrist/chiroprapist.

To find your nearest Leg Club (no appointment needed), visit: www.legclub.org/about-leg-clubs or ring: **01473 749565**.