

**Healthy feet need a Podiatrist!**

# Podiatry

## Podiatry Health

This paper tells me about my feet. It shows some foot problems that many persons get. It tells me what to look for and when to go to my foot doctor. It shows me some ways to take care of my feet. The more I know, the better I can take care of my feet.

## Simply Health

Simply Health helps me learn more about health care. Simply Health gives me the information I need to talk to my doctors.

**What is a podiatrist?** A podiatrist is a foot doctor.

### What does a podiatrist do?

She looks after my feet, toenails, ankles, and lower legs.

She can give me **orthotics**. They will fix problems I can get. Problems can be pain in my ankle (ank-ul), lower leg or lower back.

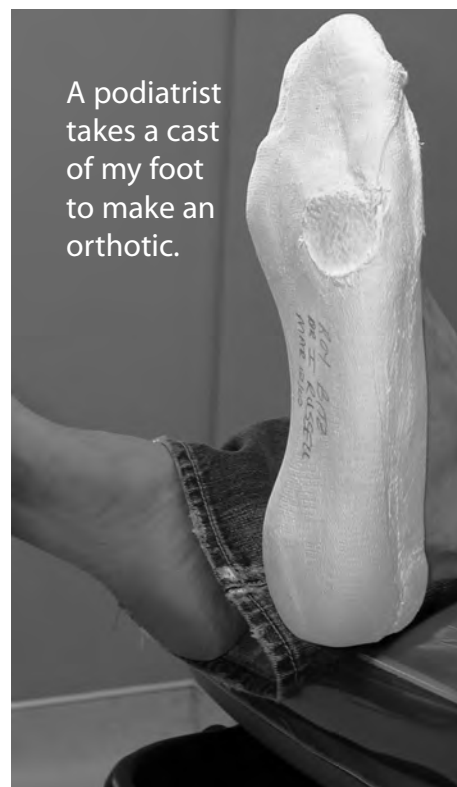
An orthotic is thin foam or rubber. It is the shape of my foot. It helps my foot to be in the best position.

I can go to my family doctor if I have problems with my feet or legs.

She may send me to a foot doctor. The foot doctor can teach me to look after my feet. When I know how to look after my feet, I can keep them healthy.

The foot doctor will also help fix my feet if I have problems, such as:

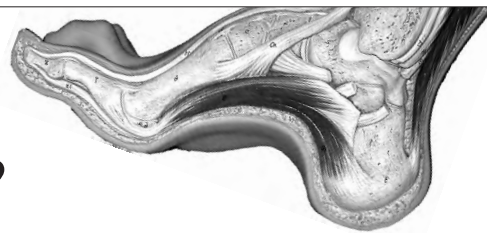
- I need foot surgery
- I have bone and joint problems
- I have problems with my feet from diabetes
- I have hurt my foot or ankle



I put an orthotic inside my shoe.

### Do my feet have to hurt to see a podiatrist?

No. I can have foot problems that I cannot even feel. So, I should see a foot doctor even if my feet do not hurt.



### Will it hurt to go to a foot doctor?

Most checkups do not hurt. Mostly, the foot doctor just cleans my toes and cuts my toenails.

### What do I need to know before I go to the podiatrist?

The foot doctor looks at my lower legs.

- I should wear loose pants that I can roll up.
- Or, I should bring shorts with me to put on.

I must wash my feet before I go, or I can go early in the morning.



Wear shorts



Wear loose pants

### What happens when I go for the check-up?

The foot doctor looks at my feet and lower legs.

- She will ask me to take my shoes and socks off.
- She will ask me to roll-up my pant legs.

I will sit in a chair and put my feet on a stool.

The doctor will sit on a stool beside my feet to see them better.

Then she will touch my feet and move them around from side to side. She may ask me to get up and walk around a bit. That way she can see how my ankles and legs work.

She will help me if I have a problem with my toes.

If I have an ingrown toenail, she may cut my toenails or get rid of the infection.

She will cut my toenails and file down calluses if I cannot do it myself.

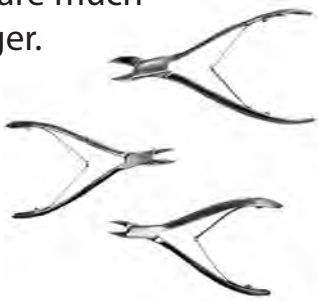


# What do I see when I go to the podiatrist?

Here are some tools I may see when I go to the foot doctor.

## Toenail clippers

These are like fingernail clippers, but are much bigger.



## Toenail files

Toenail files are like fingernail files.



## Callus plane

A callus plane is a tool that has a razor inside. It takes a thin piece of dead skin off my foot.



## Electric file/burr

This electric file only files down the top of my toenail.

It rubs away hard, dead skin on my toes, heels, or the ball of my foot.



# What foot problems can my podiatrist help me stop before they start?

## Ingrown Toenail



My toenail can grow under the skin at the side of my toe. When this happens, I can get an infection.

How do I get an ingrown toenail?

- I stub my toe really hard.
- My shoes and socks do not fit right.
- I cut my toenails in a curve/arc.

When I have an ingrown toenail, my toe looks red.

It feels very sore. My foot doctor can help fix the ingrown toenail. She can make the infection go away. She can show me how to cut my toenails. That will stop me from getting an infection.

## Bunion

A bunion is when the joint below my big toe swells. It swells because the bone inside my foot pushes outward. It rubs on my shoes when I walk.



## Hammertoe

Hammertoe is when the muscles in my toes get very tight. Tight muscles pull my toes back into a curl. If I have hammertoes, it is easy to get corns on top of my curled toes.



## Corns

A corn is a callus on my toe. A callus is hard skin. It grows when my foot rubs inside my shoes. This can happen if I have hammertoes. It can also be from shoes that do not fit right. Corns can swell very big. They can get infected.



## Callus

A callus is a hard growth of dead skin. It grows on parts of my feet. Dead skin does not hurt. It can be very hard. A callus helps keep the soft part of my foot from hurting. But it can grow too big.

## Toenail fungus

Toenail fungus grows under my toenail. This fungus makes my toenail go brown and look funny. Fungus does not hurt. But it can make me lose a toenail!



## Warts

A wart is a virus. It grows in lumps anywhere on my body. Warts can grow on the bottoms of my feet. When I walk, I press on the wart. This can hurt.



## Blisters

A blister is a sore. It happens when skin rubs on something. I can get one on my foot. This happens if my shoes or socks do not fit.



## Heel spurs

A heel spur is a sharp bony point. It grows on my heel bone. It is made of calcium. A heel spur can hurt a lot when I walk.



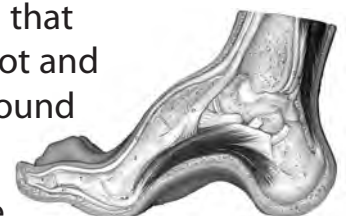
## Flat feet

Some persons have no arch in their foot. The arch is between the big toe and the heel. With a flat foot, all of the foot touches the ground when I walk.



## High arch

Some persons have a very high arch. This means that only the ball of my foot and my heel touch the ground when I walk.



A high arch can make problems, such as: corns, calluses, and hammertoes. If I have a high arch, I must wear good shoes.

# How do I take care of my feet?

Walk and keep a healthy body weight. Go for a walk.

- It is good exercise for me and my feet.
- If I walk, I keep my feet strong.

Exercise can help me keep my weight down. When I am active, my blood moves around my body.



Wear shoes and socks that fit.

- Shoes and socks that fit me right are not too tight or too loose.
- Socks that are too small can cut off the blood flow to my feet. This can hurt the **blood vessels** and **veins** in my feet, even if I do not feel pain.



Get a shoe fitter who knows how to fit shoes.

- She will find out what size of shoe I need. Get someone to do this every time I get new shoes.
- My feet may get bigger or change shape over time.
  - My left foot may be different from my right foot.



# Why is it important to keep my feet healthy?

Because I can make sure I do not get foot problems. If I have diabetes, I must be careful with my feet. If I have diabetes it is easy to get bad infections from sores and cuts on my feet.

## For what foot problems should I see my doctor about right away?

I step on a nail, glass or any object that cuts my foot.

I always have sore muscles in my feet or lower leg after walking.

The joints or bones in my feet always hurt when I walk.

I have red, sore skin or toenails (I could have an infected sore).

My feet or toes are itchy and have spots.

My toenails are yellow or brown or start to grow lumpy.

I see blisters or large blue **blood vessels** on my feet.

I have sores or open areas in my skin that do not heal.

Use ice (cold) on my feet or ankles if I hurt them. Ice stops my feet from **swelling**.



I hurt my foot and the pain will not go away. If so, I should see my family doctor or my foot doctor.



Check my feet and toes every day.

- For cuts, bruises or sores.
- Check my toenails to see if they get thicker or turn colour.
- If I cannot do these, ask someone to help me, or use a mirror to see my feet.

Why check my feet every day? Sometimes, I may not feel a blister or cut. If I cannot feel it, I cannot heal it!



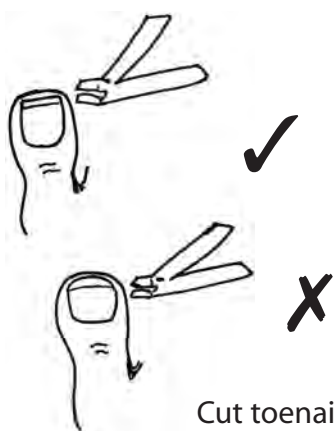
Wash my feet every day.

- I can do this when I am in the shower or bath.
- Use mild soap.
- Dry my feet with a soft towel.
- Make sure I dry between my toes!

Cut my toenails flat across. Do not cut my toenails in a round shape.

- This can give me an ingrown toenail.

I can ask my foot doctor to show me how to cut my toenails.



Cut toenails flat across.

In the winter, keep my feet dry and warm.

Wear warm, thick socks.

- My feet sweat and get wet when they are hot.

Why keep my feet dry?

- Because wet feet get cold faster.
- Dry feet stay warmer longer.

I should take an extra pair of socks to work with me.

Then I can put dry socks on if I need to.



Change my socks

## See a foot doctor one or two times a year.

My foot doctor will tell me how many times I should see her.

# What should I not do to my feet?

I must not go barefoot.  
I must wear shoes!

- Shoes **support** my feet and ankles.
- They help me walk right.

Shoes keep my feet safe from sharp objects, such as rocks, that can cut or bruise (brooze) my feet.



Do not use heat or hot water if I hurt my feet or ankles.

Heat makes my blood flow to the area that is hurt.

This can make my feet and ankles **swell**.

Do not wear shoes with tall heels every day.

- High heels put pressure on my feet.
- This can give me foot problems, such as corns.



Do not wear shoes for sports they are not made for. Wear running shoes to run and golf shoes to golf.

Do not wear shoes for longer than 9 months. Buy new shoes once every 9 months.

If I do not use my shoes much, they will support my foot for a longer time.

# Do NOT smoke!

- If I smoke, I must stop smoking!
- Smoking hurts the **blood vessels** in my feet. This can add to the problems I get when I have diabetes.
- I must see my doctor about smoking if I have diabetes.



# What the hard words mean

**Ankle:** This is the joint where my foot and leg join.

**Arch:** This is a raised part of my foot. It looks like a half circle.

**Ball of foot:** This is the flat part of the bottom of my foot near the toes.

**Blisters:** A sore that puffs up with fluid or infection. I can get a blister when my shoe rubs against my foot.

**Blood vessels:** Long, small tubes that carry blood to different parts of our body. Same as **veins**.

**Bunion (bun-yun):** When part of the joint below my big toe swells. My joint swells because the bone inside my foot pushes outward. It rubs on my shoes when I walk.

**Callus:** A hard growth of dead skin. Dead skin does not hurt and can be very hard.

**Callus files:** A flat file that wears down hard, dry skin.

**Callus plane:** A tool that has a razor inside. It takes a thin piece of dead skin off my foot.

**Corns:** A corn is a callus on my toe that swells from rubbing on my shoe.

**Electric file/burr:** An electric tool that has a file at one end. It takes away calluses and corns that are hard to cut.

**Flat feet:** When I have flat feet, it means I have no arch in my foot.

**Hammertoe:** When the muscles (tendons) in my toes pull my toes back into a curl. If I have hammertoes, I may get corns on top of my toes.

**Heel:** The flat, narrow part of my foot below my ankle (see picture of healthy foot).

**Heel spurs (heel spers):** A heel spur is a sharp bony point that grows on my heel. It is made of calcium.

**High arch:** When the arch of my foot is very, very curved. It can make problems, such as corns, calluses, and hammertoes.

**Ingrown toenail:** When my toenail grows under the skin at the side of my toe.

**Orthotic:** A flat bit of foam or rubber that gives my foot the support I need.

**Podiatrist (po-die-a-trist):** A foot doctor. She looks after my feet, toenails, ankles, and lower legs.

**Support:** Good shoes, socks or orthotics that help line my legs and feet up. I walk better with good foot support. My feet and legs do not hurt as much.

**Swelling:** When my foot puffs up from infection or injury.

**Toenail clippers:** These clippers are much bigger than fingernail clippers. They are big so they can cut thick toenails.

**Toenail fungus (fun-gus):** Grows under the toenail. Fungus is alive and grows slowly under the nail. It makes my nail lumpy and yellow or brown.

**Veins:** Long tubes that carry blood to the different parts of my body. Same as **blood vessels**.

**Warts:** A virus that grows lumps. I can get them on my feet.