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*Helping you to live life well*

# Foot Ulcers

## Patient guide



## What is a foot ulcer?

You have developed a foot ulcer. An ulcer is an open wound.

On the foot ulcers tend to develop over bony areas where pressures are higher and repetitive during activities such as walking and standing.

The heel, the ball of the foot and the toes are areas where ulcers are commonly found.

An ulcer can develop from any source of irritation to the skin, for example:

- a corn
- excessive pressure
- an abrasion
- trauma

An ulcer can also develop due to poor circulation or diseases that affect the circulation to the feet.



## To give your ulcer the best chance of healing please follow this advice:

### Rest

If you continue to walk on your injured foot you can make the ulcer worse. It may be slow to heal and is more likely to become infected.

### Treatment

Your podiatrist will assess the ulcer and probably remove any dead tissue or hard skin covering it in order to examine the tissue underneath. This will appear to make the ulcer larger. However, if the dead tissue is not removed the ulcer will take longer to heal and this will increase the chances of infection.

### Dressings

A dressing is applied to keep the ulcer site clean and encourage healing. It is important to keep the dressing clean and dry in between treatments. Your podiatrist may also provide you with insoles, or special footwear, to reduce the pressure over the ulcer site. In some cases padding may be directly applied to the foot. Your podiatrist can only provide this if your footwear is appropriate and able to accommodate extra padding.



## Infection

Sometimes ulcers become infected. If you notice:

- Swelling - has your shoe become too tight?
  - Colour change - is there any redness of the skin around the ulcer? Are there any bluish marks like bruising or is the skin going black?
  - Discharge or pus - has your ulcer become wet where it was dry before? Is there blood or pus discharging from it?
  - Have you developed any new ulcers or blistering?
  - Has your ulcer become painful or uncomfortable or is your foot throbbing?
  - Do you feel unwell with fever or flu-like symptoms?
- If the answer to any of these questions is yes, contact your podiatrist or doctor immediately.

**Do not wait until your next appointment**



## What happens next?

Once you have developed an ulcer you may be more prone to developing another.

Your podiatrist will discuss this with you and provide you with general foot care to reduce the chance of your foot ulcer recurring.

If you have any other questions regarding the treatment of your foot ulcer please contact your podiatrist.

Contact the Podiatry Team on 0117 919 0275

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