

Healthy aging it's your move!



FOOT HEALTH

Your feet change as you age. It is important to take care of your feet as you get older. If you are unable to walk due to painful feet or if your physical activity level decreases, you may lose strength and this can increase your risk of falling. Good balance can prevent falls, a major cause of injury and loss of independence. Healthy, pain-free feet allow you to stay active and keep your balance.

Common foot problems in older adults

Corns: Thickened area of skin that forms over pressure points between toes or on the top of the foot.

Calluses: Thickened area of skin that forms over pressure points on the sides and bottom of the foot.

Toenail fungus: Toenail damage caused by fungus that develops as a result of wearing closed shoes that are too tight or applying multiple coats of nail polish.

Plantar warts: Growths in the skin of the foot caused by a viral infection, typically on the sole of the foot (i.e. plantar surface), that look raised and feel rough, hard, flat and painful.

Bunions: Enlarged area at the base of the big toe that may be tender, swollen or painful.

Blisters: Fluid-filled, painful area caused by rubbing and pressure from poorly-fitting shoes, wrinkled socks or excessive moisture.

Note: Do not try to treat foot problems yourself with chemicals or sharp tools because this may cause wounds that heal slowly and become infected. Have your feet checked and treated by a health care professional.

Diabetes and foot health

People with diabetes may have trouble with their feet related to circulation and loss of skin sensation (e.g. hot, cold, pain). As a result, injuries to the foot are a common complication of diabetes. If injuries to the skin of the foot are left untreated – even small cuts or sores – they can become deeper and larger sores, called ulcers.

If you have diabetes, the following tips can promote good foot health: Inspect feet and toenails daily, cut toenails straight across, wear appropriate footwear and avoid going barefoot. Also, avoid wearing socks with seams or elastics around your feet and legs that are too tight. See a foot care specialist for regular foot exams, check-ups or treatments.

See your health care professional or foot care specialist right away if:

- You have a sore on your foot that is not healing or gets infected
- Your feet are unusually cold
- You feel cramps, numbness, tingling, pain or discomfort in your feet
- You see a change in the colour, shape or thickness of your toenails

PUBLIC HEALTH

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Every day tips for healthy feet

- Be active to maintain a healthy weight and to maintain good circulation and muscle tone
- Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes – the right shoes for the right activity (e.g. walking shoes for walking)
- When purchasing new shoes, do so later in the day when your feet are at their largest size
- Wash your feet daily using warm water
- Dry or wipe off feet thoroughly, especially between toes
- Use moisturizing cream on the top and bottom of your feet to prevent dry skin. Dry off excess cream from your feet and do not apply cream between your toes as excess moisture can promote infection
- Inspect your feet regularly. Check your feet for cuts, blisters, sores, infected toenails or swelling
- Consult a health care professional or podiatrist to treat your feet

Tips for trimming or cutting toenails

- Cut toenails after bathing since water will soften them and they will be easier to cut
- Use proper nail clippers to cut toenails
- Trim nails straight across and not too short
- Try not to cut toenails at the corner of the nail or on the sides to avoid ingrown toenails
- Seek help from a health care professional if your eyesight is poor, you have problems reaching your feet, have diabetes, or notice infected toenails or ingrown toenails

Be active every day

Walking is the best way to keep you and your feet healthy because you can do it anytime, anywhere – for free!

- Avoid long periods of sitting or standing still
- Move your feet, flex your muscles and change position frequently to increase your blood flow
- Choose to be active. Increase your strength, flexibility and balance