



Foot Health Fact Sheet

WHAT IS A PODIATRIST?

Did you know...

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Podiatrists are lower limb experts who are university-trained to prevent, diagnose, treat and rehabilitate medical and surgical conditions of the feet and lower limbs. Often, these conditions stem from other underlying health issues such as diabetes and arthritis. However, Podiatrists also manage a large amount of acute/sports injuries like ankle sprains, plantar fasciitis, stress fractures, Achilles tendonitis, shin splints, patellofemoral joint syndrome and much more.

Podiatrists are all around you, and they work in both public health centres and private practice clinics. To find a podiatrist near you, you can search by location at podiatry.org.au

Why do people see podiatrists?

Your feet house a quarter of the bones in our entire bodies – in addition to many more various muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints. This makes them extremely vulnerable to injury and diseases that can affect the entire body.

A podiatrist will not just look at your foot, but they will carry out a biomechanical assessment to see how your gait can be impacting other parts of your body, such as your hips and back. (Your gait is the way you walk.)

Podiatrists are university educated to understand the structure and movement of the foot and lower limbs. They diagnose foot conditions, identify systemic overall health conditions that present with foot or lower limb symptoms – and recommend appropriate treatment plans.

When should you see a podiatrist?

You may be experiencing pain in your feet, ingrown or discoloured skin/nails, corns, skin rashes, foot odour, foot injuries, broader health problems such as diabetes or arthritis, recurrent tripping or falling, problems fitting comfortably in your regular shoes; or if you notice swelling, lumps, or redness on your feet or legs.

It is a common misconception that painful feet are a normal side effect from everyday activities. Yet research shows that only a fraction of individuals suffering from sore feet seek out professional advice.

Just as you would visit your dentist for a toothache, you should visit a podiatrist if you suffer from painful or tired feet and/or lower limbs. You should see a podiatrist 1-2 times a year for a general check-up/maintenance in the same way as you should a dentist. You don't need a GP referral to see a podiatrist. Podiatrists can also connect you into other allied health professionals and specialists to work in a team that gets the best outcomes for you.



Find a podiatrist at podiatry.org.au

This fact sheet is available as a single page download from podiatry.org.au



DO YOU NEED TO SEE A PODIATRIST?



DOES THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

- Can you only walk for a short period before your feet or legs hurt?
- Do you experience pain in your lower limbs at night?
- Do you experience tingling in your feet?
- Have you noticed your legs or feet are swollen?
- Do you have cuts or fissures on your feet that take a long time to heal?
- Are you returning to sport after an injury?
- Are you uncertain about which running or sports shoe to buy?
- Do you find that you wear out the outside of your shoes quickly?
- Have you noticed your toes poke holes in the top of your shoes?
- Does your forefoot become hot and painful after running or walking?
- Do your hips hurt?
- Has pain in your feet or legs stopped you from exercising?
- Are you worried about your child's feet?
- Do you have arthritis in your feet?
- Do you experience reoccurring gouty attacks?
- Are you worried about the thickness of your nails?
- Do you have discoloured toe nails?
- Are you worried about your foot odour?
- Do your toe nails cause you pain?
- Have you noticed your toes are clawed?
- Do you have hard skin on your feet? Is it getting worse?
- Do you find it hard to cut your own nails?
- Do you find it hard to fit your feet into shoes because of your bunion?

Ticked one or more boxes? Then you need to see a podiatrist.

GO SEE A PODIATRIST BECAUSE...

Podiatrists are Foot Health Experts and understand the structure and movement of your feet and lower limbs.

They can assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, knee, leg or hip pain.

Given your feet alone house a quarter of the bones in your entire body, a podiatrist is best placed to get you moving, active or pain-free.

FIND A PODIATRIST NEAR YOU

Contact the Australian Podiatry Association at podiatry.org.au and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.



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