

Put your best foot forward this Foot Health Month (April)

This April is Foot Health month, a chance to check that our feet are getting the care and attention that they need. Local podiatrist, Family Footcare Centre is looking to raise awareness of the importance of good foot health, as part of this campaign from the College of Podiatry.

Foot care is important through all stages of life. For children, it is necessary to take extra care with foot health to avoid problems and deformities in later life, and as we get older, everyday wear and tear can take its strain. Podiatrists are experts in all aspects of the foot and lower limb, who undergo years of specialist training to enable them to diagnose, treat and help people to look after their feet and lower limbs.

To mark Foot Health month, Family Footcare Centre is offering a FREE ASSESSMENT and 10% off your first treatment for new customers

Sarah Smout of Family Footcare Centre said: "Feet are one of the hardest working parts of our body, but they are also one of the most neglected. During Foot Health Month we want to remind people to get to know their feet and not ignore any foot pain they might experience. Walking through pain or ignoring problems can over time cause damage to the feet and lower limbs. So if your feet hurt, or you notice anything unusual about them, visit a registered podiatrist, who can diagnose causes of pain and provide appropriate treatment."

Five easy ways to keep your feet healthy

1. **Cut nails correctly.** It's best to use nail nippers rather than cutters, because they have a small cutting blade and a longer handle. Cut nails straight across and not too low at the edge or sides. The corner of the nail should be visible above the skin. It's better to cut nails after a bath or shower when they are much softer
2. **Don't forget to moisturise.** After washing feet, dry thoroughly and apply a good foot moisturiser all over the foot. Avoid moisturiser between the toes, as this can cause the skin to become overly macerated, causing it to break down. The best foot creams contain urea
3. **Don't assume flat is best.** People are more aware now of the health problems associated with wearing high heeled shoes frequently, but completely flat slip-on styles, such as a ballerina pump, are not ideal for everyday wear as they offer very

little shock absorption or support. Slip-on styles also cause the toes to claw in order to hold the foot in place

4. **Alternate shoes and keep them clean inside.** Feet naturally sweat, and wearing the same pair every day doesn't give them a chance to dry out and they can then be a breeding ground for bacteria. To help keep your shoes clean and prevent them from becoming smelly, clean inside the shoe with some surgical spirit on a cotton wool pad to reduce the bacteria
5. **Check your feet regularly.** Common symptoms to look out for are yellow, brittle and discoloured nails - which can be a sign of a nail infection, flaky skin that may be dry or red or itchy – which can be a symptom of athlete's foot, and any changes to the structure of the foot such as swelling to the joint around the ball of the foot.

Foot pain is not normal. If you or a family member experience pain then visit a podiatrist.

To talk to a podiatrist about the options available regarding treatment; you can contact an NHS podiatrist or a private practice podiatrist. In both cases, always ensure that any practitioners you visit are registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) and describe themselves as a podiatrist (or chiropodist).

Visit www.cop.org.uk for more information about foot health and to find a registered podiatrist near you.