Foot Health Fact Sheet

PAIN

Did you know...

Your feet hold 25% of the bones in your body – each foot has a total of 26 bones with 33 joints – and more than a hundred muscles, tendons, and ligaments?

Are you experiencing pain in your feet or lower limbs? This can provide clues to many related ailments throughout your body. Here is a round-up of what your various pain signals may indicate.

What are the main causes of foot and lower limb pain?

There are many causes of this kind of pain, including:

- Heel pain (plantar fasciitis)
- Injury – such as sprains, breaks and fractures
- Arthritis – inflammation of the joints and other tissues
- Tendonitis – inflammation of the tendon structures that attach to the bones of your feet (e.g. the Achilles which connects your calf muscle to your feet)
- Shin splints – refers to pain felt anywhere along the shinbone from the knee to the ankle
- Peripheral vascular disease – where blood flow is constricted
- Sever's disease – is a common cause of heel pain, particularly in young and physically active people
- Deep vein thrombosis – a blood clot that forms in the veins of the leg
- Sciatica and radiculopathy – pain in the buttock and leg caused by pressure on nerves in the lower back
- Flat feet, corns, calluses, bunions or a range of other ailments

How can you heal your pain?

A good step is to see your podiatrist, who can assess and treat you as part of a personalised treatment plan. It can also help to look after your overall general health – by drinking plenty of water, wearing correct footwear and exercising regularly where possible.

What is the best treatment?

No single treatment works for everyone, which is why it is so important to see a podiatrist who can tailor a treatment plan to specifically reflect your needs.

Treatment for pain can be varied – to include anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen. Whereas if swelling and inflammation is the cause of pain – ice packs, strapping and stretching can form part of your treatment plan. For biomechanical issues – such as flat feet or bunions – orthotics may be prescribed as part of a wider treatment plan.

Given the complexity of ailments affecting the feet and lower limbs, only your podiatrist can prescribe the treatment most suited to your needs. Most importantly, don't self-diagnose pain treatment – please see a podiatrist.

FOOT HEALTH WEEK

DO YOU NEED TO SEE A PODIATRIST?

DOES THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

- ☐ Can you can 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.

Find a podiatrist at **podiatry.org.au**

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

Australian Podiatry Association