

Footwear

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The importance of good footwear

Many foot problems are caused by wearing inappropriate shoes or hosiery and can be easily solved by buying well-fitted shoes. Wearing well-fitted shoes is an essential part of your role in keeping feet healthy and preventing ulcers, blisters, ingrown toenails, corns, and callus.



It is a good idea to check your feet every day for signs of irritation when you take your shoes off.

Buying shoes

When you buy new shoes:

- ask for your feet to be measured by a trained shoe fitter as the shape and size of feet may change over time
- try to shop for shoes in the afternoon, when feet are at their largest
- stand up in the shoes and walk around the shop – take your time

What to look for in a shoe

Length – there should be ½ inch of shoe in front of the longest toe.

Width – the toes should not feel cramped together or cause a bulge at the side of the shoe.

Depth – the toes should not feel cramped together or touch the top of the shoe.

Heel – a low, wide heel is best to form a stable platform.

Fastening – shoes should have a fastening to prevent your foot sliding forward. Look for a shoe with laces, Velcro, or a strap. Also, if your feet swell during the day, they can be adjusted.

Sole – synthetic soles are often better shock absorbers than thin leather soles. Make sure the shoe has enough grip on the bottom to prevent slipping.

Upper – ideally this should be made from a natural fibre or breathable fabric to prevent excessive sweating. Feel inside the shoes with your hands to ensure there are no seams or ridges inside that could cause rubbing.

Insoles – choose a shoe with a removable insole if possible. This allows the podiatrist to supply a bespoke insole if required.

Hosiery

Ill-fitting hosiery can cause restriction of blood flow to your feet.

- Socks, tights and stockings should be made of natural fibres to allow the skin to breathe
- Check that there are no bulky seams and that the elastic at the top does not dig into the leg
- Wear hosiery inside out to prevent seams rubbing the toes
- You should change your socks, stockings, or tights everyday

Surgical stockings are supposed to be tightly fitted. You must wear these if your doctor or nurse has recommended them.

Slippers

Checking your slippers fit correctly is just as important as checking your shoes. Well-worn slippers can have little support and may lead to slips and trips around the home.

When buying slippers look for:

- a cushioned sole with good grip
- a fastening to hold the foot in the slipper

Alternatively wear a comfortable, well-fitted shoe around the house.

Further information

If you seek private treatment, we recommend that you ensure the podiatrist or chiropodist is registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Local podiatry contact details:

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| North Email: rduh.podiatry@nhs.net Tel 01271 341509 | East Email: rduh.podiatryappointments-eastern@nhs.net Tel: 03452 667772 |
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Useful websites:

www.feetforlife.org

www.hcpc-uk.co.uk

References

www.feetforlife.org

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, please contact:

PALS Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter

- call 01392 402093 or email rduh.pals-eastern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital in Wonford, Exeter.

PALS North Devon

- call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at the North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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