



Foot Health Fact Sheet

FOOT HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

Did you know...

It is estimated that
at least 106,000
people are homeless in
Australia on any
one night.

If you are homeless, or helping people who are experiencing homelessness, you will know that foot health can be a challenge. Here is how you can make a difference.

How can homelessness affect foot health?

Studies show that people who are homeless consequently have inadequate foot hygiene practices and improperly-fitting shoes.

Considering footwear is often insufficient – and walking is a common mode of transport for homeless people – calluses and corns are commonly seen. Secondary issues including foot infections and nail pathologies, such as ingrown toenails, are also common.

What common foot ailments exist in people who have diabetes and are experiencing homelessness?

People who are experiencing homelessness and have diabetes can find it challenging, given access to treatment can be limited. Symptoms such as difficulty when walking, loss of foot sensitivity and reduced blood flow, or permanently reduced mobility are found in a significant percentage of people experiencing homelessness, and the need for lower limb amputation can occur as a result of diabetes.

What types of treatment can be given?

You will no doubt already know that health and housing are intrinsically linked. The best thing for the health of a person who is homeless is permanent stable housing.

In terms of treatment, podiatrists often volunteer their skills at homeless services throughout Australia; to assess, diagnose and treat a range of ailments. Drop in services are also available to people experiencing homelessness, and hostel visits can be potentially arranged. Ask your local homeless service for more details, or ask them to contact the Australian Podiatry Association who may be able to help locate such services.



Find a podiatrist at foothealthaustralia.org.au

This fact sheet is available as a download from foothealthaustralia.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

Head to **foothealthaustralia.org.au** and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.



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

This fact sheet is available as a download from foothealthaustralia.org.au

