

# Looking after your feet with Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)

An information guide



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## Introduction

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD), otherwise known as hardening of the arteries, reduces the amount of blood flow and nutrition to the legs.

This means that any wounds or minor cuts to the feet will take longer to heal. Never neglect the slightest injury as this could lead to infection, ulceration and limb loss. Taking care of your feet is extremely important and so you should follow the points below.

## Check your feet daily

Problems with feet can go unnoticed. Therefore you should examine your feet daily for signs of redness, swelling, blistering, bleeding, discolouration, cracks/splits or any discharge. A mirror can be used to check the soles of your feet and if your eyesight is poor, get a relative or friend to help.



## **Wash your feet daily**

To avoid scalding your feet, always test the temperature of the water with your elbow. Wash your feet with a mild soap and water. Do not soak them for longer than five minutes. Pat them dry with a towel, paying special attention to the skin between the toes.

## **Keep your feet warm**

Ensure you wear socks to keep your feet warm. However, do not sit too close to the fire, soak your feet in hot water or use hot water bottles as these are dangerous and can burn your feet.

## **Apply skin cream daily**



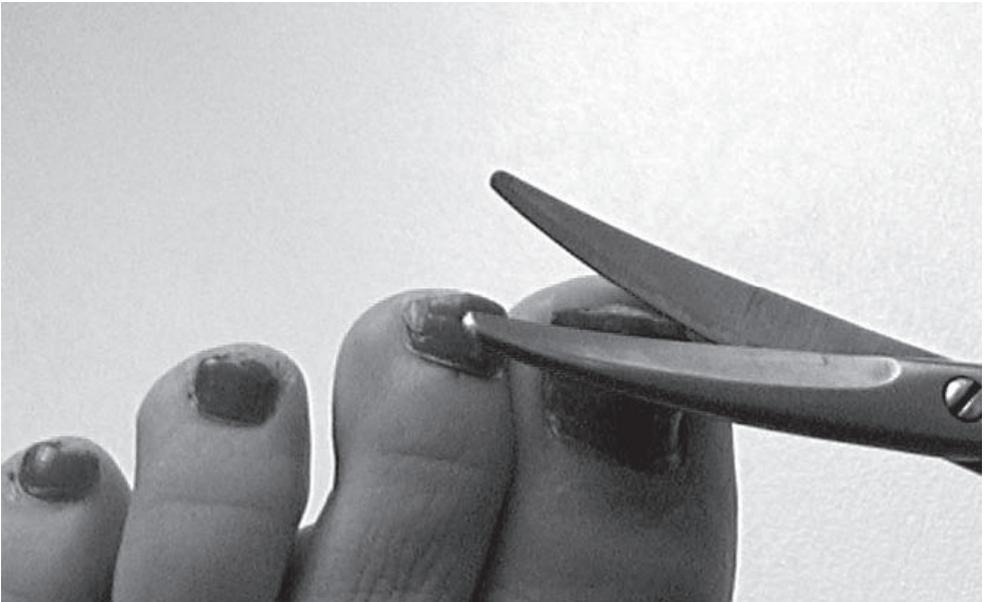
In order to keep the skin on your feet soft and supple and prevent it from cracking, apply a simple moisturiser daily. Do not apply any cream between the toes.

## **Nail care**

Always take great care when cutting your nails.

Cut your nails straight across with blunt ended scissors and smooth the nails with a file. Never cut them too short or down into the corners.

If your eyesight is poor and you find it difficult to reach your feet, or you don't feel confident to attempt routine nail care, then ask to be referred to a Health and Care Professions Council Podiatrist.



## Footwear



To ensure that your shoes fit well, always have your feet measured. The shoe should be wide enough, long enough and deep enough, with adequate fastening to prevent the foot from slipping and rubbing.

Try to buy shoes with a complete upper so that there are no seams or stitching which may catch on the toes.

Feel inside the shoe for anything that might rub on the feet. Similarly, check inside the shoes for any sharp objects etc, before you put them on. Finally, never walk barefoot.

## Socks

Change your socks daily.

Ensure that there are no holes or seams which could rub on your toes. Avoid socks that are tight around the legs as they could stop your circulation.

## **When to seek help?**

If an injury occurs, clean the wound with cooled, boiled water and cover it immediately with a sterile dressing. Never neglect the slightest injury as this could lead to infection, ulceration or loss of a limb.

Do not remove corns and hard skin. Never use corn plasters as they contain acids which can burn the skin.

Remember to look for any changes in the appearance of your legs and feet.

If you notice any changes in colour, unusual swelling, any areas of discharge, blistering or anything that is abnormal, contact either your GP, podiatrist or district nurse immediately for advice.

## **Hospital podiatry contact numbers**

Oldham - 0161 627 8507

Fairfield - 0161 778 2860

**Notes:**

**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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