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Complaints / PALS Information

Whether you want to complain, enquire or simply talk to someone about your concerns, we are here to help and support you.

North Somerset Community Partnership Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) Office can be contacted at:

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)
North Somerset Community Partnership
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Freephone: 0800 389 5260

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If you require this leaflet in large print, braille, audio format or in another language please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service. (PALS) Please contact us on the freephone number or email address above. We are pleased to offer a telephone interpreting service. For further details on how to access this service, please contact PALS using the details above.

Patient information leaflets are available for all services provided by North Somerset Community Partnership. Please ask your health care professional. North Somerset Community Partnership is committed to Equality and Diversity for both staff and those who use our services.



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Taking Care of your Feet

A guide to choosing footwear

Department of Podiatric Medicine



Choosing shoes

Feet come in all sizes, yet although shoes differ in type and style, how many of us wear the best shoes for our feet?

The 26 bones in each foot do not fully mature until we are around 18 years old, and the shoes we wear as children are vital to our future foot health.

However, we can still do enormous damage to our adult feet by wearing the wrong shoes. A shoe is basically a package. But it is a package for a delicate object - your foot. Obviously, if the package is the wrong shape, or made of the wrong materials, your foot can be damaged.

General Advice

Make sure that the shoe is wide enough and that the toes are not cramped together or causing a bulge at the side of the shoe. Choose a shoe with a deep toe box so that the toes have room to move up and down.

Materials

Breathable fibres, e.g. leather, suede or gortex uppers are best, as they allow the feet to breathe. The lining should be smooth and without seams or ridges.

Fastenings

Shoes with laces, straps, buckles or Velcro are best as they hold the feet securely, stopping them from sliding forward while walking.

Heels

For daily wear, a low heel of less than 4 cm (1½ inches) is best. They should also be broad and stable. Avoid shoes with thin hard soles, choosing thicker lightweight rubber soles instead.



A guide to choosing shoes that will fit

Always shop at a store with trained staff to advise you. Make a length guide out of some cardboard longer than the foot.

Helpful tips for measuring your feet.

Determine your foot length from the back of the heel and the tip of your longest toe and mark these points on the cardboard strip. (The big toe is not necessarily the longest toe). Make sure that there is 1 cm (½ inch) overlap at the heel end. *See figure 1.*

Cut the cardboard strip along the mark indicating the length of the longest toe. *See figure 2.*

Place the cardboard length guide into the shoe so that the longest toe point rests against the toe end of the shoe. The foot length in the shoe can then be determined by the gap at the heel end. *See figure 3.*



Tips on buying shoes

When trying on shoes, always wear the socks or stockings you anticipate wearing most often with them and also any insets or insoles.

- Always wear socks made of natural fibre.
- Always try on both shoes, and make sure they fit your longest foot.
- Always wear an appropriate shoe for the occasion it will be used, e.g. a specially designed trainer for sport.
- If your feet tend to swell, shop for shoes later in the day.
- Where possible shop in the week when regular staff are on duty, it is often quieter and you will get better service.
- New shoes should not need 'breaking in'.
- Expensive, ill fitting shoes are a costly mistake and may cause foot problems if the fit is poor.

So, choosing the right shoes is important. This is even more important if you suffer from foot problems. Your HCPC Registered Podiatrist can recommend footwear specifically designed for feet that need more than the "off the shelf" type of shoe.

Corns and callus

Accumulated layers of dead skin, is usually the result of pressure and friction, often from badly fitting shoes. Seek treatment from a Podiatrist and improve the fit of footwear.

Bunions

Bunions result from a deformity of the big toe joint which may become swollen and painful, making walking difficult. Bunions may be inherited and can be made worse by ill fitting footwear.

