



## Find out more

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# Holiday footcare

## Information for patients

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## Introduction

It is important that you take care of your feet at home, but especially important on holiday. Being away from home, in a different climate, doing different activities can lead to the development of foot problems.

Read the following advice carefully to make sure that you and your feet have a happy trip!

### Why might my holiday put my foot at risk?

- Location – consider where you are going. Especially abroad, it may be harder to access emergency treatment if you develop a foot problem
- Climate – a hot or cold environment might affect your feet. For example, hot temperatures may make your feet sweat and blisters more likely. Cold climates may affect the blood supply to the feet
- Activity – what you do on holiday may be a bit different to your normal activities at home. Most people increase their activity levels – for example, walking more than usual.
- Footwear – this usually changes when we go away. People tend to dig out sandals that haven't been worn since last year. Remember, feet change – what fitted last year may cause rubs and sores this year. Always make sure that your foot wear is well fitting. See the section on 'Choosing good footwear'.
- On the journey - long journeys can make your feet swell. Try to walk about every half hour if possible - even a short distance will help. This will keep the circulation moving and keep swelling down. Remember your feet may swell in heat, so make sure your shoes are not too tight.

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## Do's and Don't's

### DO

- Take out holiday insurance
- Locate a doctor on arrival – if you need emergency treatment you will know where to go
- Take a small first-aid kit containing sterile gauze dressings and Micropore tape. If you get a small blister, cut or graze, use diluted antiseptic on a gauze swab to clean the wound and tape on a dry sterile gauze dressing. Do not use cotton wool. Any wound (even minor) will need cleaning, and to be kept clean, dressed and dry. Your Pharmacist or foot care team can advise on suitable products.
- Use a sunscreen. Protect your feet from sunburn with a high factor sun protection cream (factor 30 or above) or keep them covered. Do not use dark coloured materials to protect your feet as they absorb heat and you could burn your feet.
- Check your feet every day. You should check your feet at least once a day for any blisters, breaks in the skin, pain or any signs of infection such as swelling, heat or redness, just as you would at home.
- See a doctor immediately if you develop a foot problem, however minor. On arrival back home, see your foot care team straight away.

### DON'T

- Go barefoot ANYWHERE. Always wear footwear, even on the beach or round the pool. Sand can become very warm and you may burn your feet without realising. If you go into the sea, wear some sort of footwear such as plastic or canvas shoes to protect your feet. Your feet are at risk from sharp objects (e.g. broken shells etc). Avoid wearing 'flip-flop' type footwear as they may cause blisters between your toes.
- If you have been supplied with prescription shoes **do not** wear any other shoes during your holiday (except in the water!)