

Rheumatoid / Inflammatory Arthritis

This leaflet is intended to provide simple, practical information about how rheumatoid and other inflammatory arthritic conditions may affect your feet and about how you can self-manage any problems.

Foot Problems

If you have Rheumatoid / Inflammatory Arthritis, your feet are vulnerable to painful problems, and are potentially at risk of developing ulceration, due to changes in the structure of the foot, joint changes and changes to the skin.

Toes may become deformed and painful. Joints, particularly on the balls of the feet, can become swollen and tender. The feet may become deformed, and you may develop bunions or other foot problems.

Most people will be able to care for their foot pain themselves. If needed, more specific treatments can include:

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in tablet or gel form
- Insoles / Orthotics
- Steroid injections
- Surgery.

If you are struggling with your foot pain, ask for a referral to the local podiatry department for support.

Foot ulceration

Your circulation and sensation may be impaired and the drugs you are taking may affect the

quality of your skin and your ability to heal. This can lead to ulceration.

Ulcerations are persistent sores or breaks in the skin that do not heal easily.

If you notice any cuts or sores on your feet, cover them with a clean dressing and contact your doctor, nurse or podiatry department.

You must contact your GP surgery, Podiatrist or Rheumatology team if you think you have developed a foot ulcer.

Footwear

Make sure that you are wearing appropriate shoes that fit well. It is also important that you wear good slippers that protect your feet. You can get advice about shoes and slippers from a podiatrist.

Depending upon the severity of your condition, made-to-measure footwear and/or insoles may be required. Most people can manage with off-the-shelf footwear. Athletic footwear styles (running trainers) are often helpful.

You should always wear socks or tights/stockings to help protect your feet. Make sure that these also fit well and are not rubbing your toes or digging into your legs.

There are also a number of devices to help people with putting on socks, tights/stockings and shoes. Further information is available from the Disabled Living Foundation or through your local occupational therapist

What else can you do to help your feet?

If you have difficulty cutting your nails because of painful joints in your hands, you could try filing your nails once or twice a week with a long-handled file. You should sit in a chair with arms, your feet placed on a stool and file in one direction across the nail away from you. Clean the debris from between the toes with a clean tissue.

Have a regular foot care routine. A pumice stone can be used to smooth any hard skin or callus on the bottom of the feet, and a moisturising cream can help to improve the condition of your skin (do not apply cream between the toes).

Corns and hard skin that result from deformities may need treatment. Do not use corn plasters or corn remover cream as they contain a chemical which can do more harm than good and may lead to ulceration.

Try and lose weight if you are overweight. You may be able to get support from local weight management services; speak to your GP or nurse.

To find out more about rheumatoid arthritis and how it affects feet contact: Arthritis Research Campaign
PO Box 177
Chesterfield S41 7TQ

Or look on the following websites
www.arthritisresearchuk.org
www.prcassoc.org.uk

You can search for other information leaflets on www.patient.co.uk and your G.P. also has access to this website

You may need to see a podiatrist (Health and Care Professions Council Registered) for treatment or for advice about suitable footwear.

Podiatry Service

Single Point of Access Contact Details:
Tel: 0345 602 4064
Email: SinglePoint.OfContact@nhs.net

Confidentiality

We will not share any information that you give us without discussing this with you first and getting your consent. The only exception to this is if we consider that your life or the wellbeing of someone else could be at risk

Compliments, Comments and Complaints

We welcome feedback about our services so please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on freephone 0800 7834839 or email:
elft.palsandcomplaints@nhs.net

If you are not happy with the service and your treatment, please ask to speak to the service manager to try and resolve this. Or contact the PALS team.

If you wish to make a complaint, you can call Freephone: 0800 085 8354 or email: elft.complaints@nhs.net or write to:
FREEPOST RTXT-HJLG-XEBE
Complaints Department,
The Green,
1 Roger Dowley Court.
Russia Lane,
London E2 9NJ

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Information and Advice Leaflet



**Bedfordshire
Community Health Services**

Podiatry: Rheumatoid / Inflammatory Arthritis

PATIENT INFORMATION



Podiatry Services in Bedfordshire