If you discover any problems with your feet, contact your Podiatry Department or GP immediately. If they are not available, go to your nearest accident and emergency department. Remember, any delay in getting advice or treatment when you have a problem can lead to more serious problems.

### Individual advice

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### Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect.

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

### PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services. You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email: Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road Entrance of Warwick Hospital.

### Name:

### NHS No:

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**South Warwickshire**

**NHS Foundation Trust**

**Podiatry Department**

**Toe Deformities advice leaflet**

**Podiatry Single Point of Access**

**Telephone: 01926 600810**

**Lines open 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday**

**E-mail: podiatryreferrals@swft.nhs.uk**

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SWFT Podiatry Department does not supply sport orthotics, purely for use in sports.
There are three main forms of toe abnormalities in the human foot:
- Claw toes
- Hammer toes
- Mallet toes

**Claw toe.** A claw toe is caused by one of the tendons in the foot contracting. The first bone is raised and the second two bones point downwards.

**Mallet toe.** Again, this condition is caused by one of the tendons in the foot contracting. The first two bones are straight but slightly raised and the bone at the tip is pointed downwards.

**Hammer toe.** The three bones in the toe should form a straight line but with a hammer toe the first bone is slightly raised, the second bone tilts downwards and the bone at the tip is almost flat – this condition is also caused by one of the tendons in the foot contracting.

- They occur throughout life, although are most often seen in the seventh and eighth decades.
- Women are affected four to five times more often than men.

Toe deformities are caused by a variety of factors:
- Associated with a high arched foot that may be invented or may not be the result of an underlying neurological condition.
- Genetic.
- Poorly fitted shoes - usually the result of wearing shoes that are too short and too narrow. Many people have second toes that are longer than their big toes. If they wear shoes sized to fit the big toe, the second toe has to bend to fit into the shoe, causing mallet toe. High-heeled shoes with pointed toes are also a major cause of claw toes.
- Bunions.
- Rheumatoid arthritis.
- Tendon imbalance. (When the foot cannot function normally, the tendons may stretch or tighten to compensate leading to toe deformities.)
- Traumatic injuries of the toes

**Recommended treatments**
- Reducing corns and calluses.
- Using protective sleeves to protect the toe made from e.g. foam or gel
- Wearing supportive orthotics/insoles to help relieve pressure on toe deformities.
- Using splints or small straps to realign the affected toe.
- Correct footwear, wearing shoes with a wider and deeper toe box.
- Injecting anti-inflammatories to relieve pain and inflammation.
- Surgery.