



## **Why have I been referred to the service**

Rheumatology conditions can cause painful joints which can lead to changes in the way the foot appears and works. The aim of the podiatrist is to try to minimize these changes and relieve discomfort.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published guidelines on what treatment people with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) should expect to receive from their NHS foot health department. This includes an annual foot assessment with a podiatrist who should offer specialist advice on their feet including advise on footwear, insole/ orthotic therapy if needed and appropriate reduction of corns and or callus.

## **What should I expect from the service?**

- You will be asked to provide details of your past or present medical history, any medication you take and any past podiatry treatments
- You will be asked about your footwear and any activities that may affect your feet and lower limb. You will be given footwear advice if needed.
- You may undergo a biomechanical assessment which will involve the podiatrist examining the way you walk, stand and the way in which your foot functions. You may be offered insoles or orthotics if needed as long as your footwear is appropriate.
- If the podiatrist determines that you require callus/corn reduction or care to problematic nails then this will be carried out.

- After examining your feet the podiatrist will discuss a treatment plan with you and you may be offered timely review appointments.

## **What do I need to bring to my appointment?**

- A list of medication with dosage
- Details of previous medical treatments with approximate dates
- At least 2 pairs of shoes that have been worn recently
- Any previous foot appliances, insoles or orthotics

## **Rheumatology**

If you have a Rheumatology condition you may have problems with your feet. It can lead to inflamed joints and tendons which can cause structural damage to your feet which can lead to pain, discomfort and difficulty walking and getting about.

The ankle joint can be affected leading to pain and stiffness. Toes can change shape leading to mallet or clawed toes which can be problematic when trying to get shoes to fit. Pain under the balls of the feet (metatarsal area) can be from soft tissue damage.

Common problems are the occurrence of neuroma (a fibrous thickening of nerve), bursa (a sac of fluid over a joint) or nodules (form under the skin where there is pressure). Any area on the foot which is being traumatised can lead to corns or callus which can be very painful.

Bunions or problems with the big toe (Hallux) can also occur which can be painful and make shoe fitting very difficult.

You may experience poor tissue viability which can develop from poor arterial circulation. Some treatments for your illness may delay wound healing which can lead to non healing sores on the foot, especially where there is high level of trauma.

**If you detect any open wound, redness, discharge or heat on your foot it is important to seek medical advice as soon as possible. Make an urgent appointment to see your GP, nurse or podiatrist.**

The podiatrist will be able to help with the care of your feet. They can assess the disease process in your feet by looking at, feeling and moving the joints in your feet.

They will observe the way your foot moves when you walk and stand. They can monitor any changes taking place in your feet as a result of your diagnosis.

The Podiatrist can offer help and advise in foot care and discuss your footwear. They can offer advice on how best to manage your nail care.

If the podiatrist believes that you will benefit from orthotics or insoles then a pair of these will be provided. If you have any corns or callus the podiatrist may treat these for you too.

The podiatrist may feel that you will benefit from other health professionals advice and treatment, such as surgery or the provision of surgical footwear and they will be able to refer you for further help and assistance.