



Foot Care

From Looking After Someone's Else's Feet. -The Scottish Govt

What is personal footcare?

This is what a healthy adult would normally do for their own feet if they are able to. You can do a lot to support others with personal footcare & help to keep their feet in good condition.

This includes:

- checking that feet are in good order
- keeping feet clean
- providing skin care
- keeping toenails at a good length
- choosing & wearing good fitting footwear
- getting help if you notice a problem

Checking feet:

Get to know the feet of the person you support and know what is normal for them. It is best to do this where there is good natural light or in a well-lit room. Sit on a stool or chair facing the person & place their foot on your lap, on top of a towel. If they are very immobile it may be easier for them to sit on their bed with their legs outstretched.

Check one foot at a time:

- Look at the top, the sole, the heel and in between the toes
- Are there any cuts or sores?
- Is there any blood or fluid leaking from a sore area?
- Look out for any changes such as redness, swelling or bruising
- To be able to see any problems quickly you should try & check their feet every day
- If the person has diabetes, make sure they get a healthcare professional to check their feet once a year at their annual diabetes review

How to keep feet clean:

Wash their feet every day if possible as part of good personal hygiene practice. If they are unable to get into the shower or bath regularly it may be easier to wash their feet using a basin.

Always wash your hands & apply PPE – Gloves & an apron.

Before you start make sure you have everything you need beside you –mild soap, a soft brush such as a nail brush & a clean dry towel.

- Fill the basin half full of warm water.
- Sit the person comfortably on a chair & place both their feet in the water.
- Use the soap to lather up & clean their feet making sure you get in between their toes.
- Use the soft brush to rub over the nails.
- Try not to soak their feet for too long – **no more than 10 minutes soaking** -to prevent drying out the skin.
- Dry both feet carefully taking care to pat dry in between the toes.
- If you find it difficult to dry in between their toes you could try using cotton buds or folded cotton wool pads.

Foot Skin Care

If their skin is dry apply a moisturising cream every day over the dry areas – usually the tops, the heel area & the soles. Massage the cream in well using small circular movements.

Do not put cream in between their toes.

- If their skin is very moist, after the daily wash, use cotton wool that is wet with some surgical spirit to dab the soles of the feet & in between their toes.
- It is natural for feet to sweat, however, sometimes this can be excessive. Sweaty feet can cause an odour with the skin between the toes becoming white & damp.
- That is why it is important to wash & dry their feet thoroughly every day.

Removing Dry Skin:

You can **remove small patches of hard skin from their feet** by using a foot file or pumice stone. Gently rub the affected area in one direction.

Personal footcare kit should include -

- Nail clippers
- Nail file or emery board
- Foot file

Keep this kit together in a plastic box or wash bag. You can buy nail clippers, files & emery boards in your local high street or online.

- Keep the tools clean & in good order - washing in warm soapy water after use.
- Rinse them in clear hot or cold water & allow them to dry thoroughly before storing them.
- Prevent the spread of germs & don't share footcare kits with other people.

How to cut & file toenails

When cutting &/or filing a person's nails you will need to:

- first ask for their permission to do this & ask what they prefer - either to cut or file their toenails
- Ask them to sit somewhere comfortably
- Sit facing the person & place their foot on your lap on top of a small towel.
- If possible, have the light source from a window or lamp shining on the person's feet.
- If the person is unable to raise their leg onto your lap it may be easier if they sit on their bed with their legs outstretched with you sitting on a chair or stool at the end of the bed.

Cutting toenails

- Make several small clips or nibbles on the nail with the tip of the nail clippers.
- Cut the nails following their natural shape.
- Aim to have the final length of the nail just below the tip of each toe.
- **Do not** cut down the sides of nails as this can leave the surrounding skin uncomfortable.

Filing nails

- Remove any rough edges using a nail file or emery board.
- File the nails in the direction away from the person's ankle or in a sideways motion from the sides to the centre of each nail.
- File thickened nails both in the length & the thickness.
- It is easier to file nails when they are dry
- File toenails 1 x a week - keeps them at a reasonable length.
- When finished, remove PPE, wash hands & throw nail clippings in the bin & launder the towel.