

Patient Fact Sheet

Callus



What is it?

Callus or callosity, is an extended area of thickened skin which can occur on the soles and around the heels of the feet. It is the body's reaction to pressure that may be placed on the feet by footwear or a change in the way a person stands and walks.

Most calluses are symptoms of an underlying problem like a bony deformity or a particular style of walking or inappropriate footwear. Some people have a tendency to form callus because of their skin type. Elderly people have less fatty tissue in their skin, which acts as cushioning, and this can lead to callus forming on the ball of the foot.

What to do?

You can control a small amount of hard skin by gently rubbing with a pumice stone, chiropody sponge or foot file every time prior to bathing/showering. After bathing or showering regular applications of a good quality cream into the skin will help to keep them soft.

If the callus is painful and feels as if you are walking on stones consult a chiropodist who will be able to remove the hard skin, relieve pain and redistribute the pressure with soft padding, strapping, or corrective appliances which will fit into your shoes. The skin should then return to normal.

The elderly can benefit from padding to the ball of the foot, to compensate for the loss of natural padding. Emollient creams delay the build up of callus and help to improve the skin's natural elasticity.