

Antibiotic Treatment

You may be given antibiotics if there are signs of infection in the wound or in the nearby tissue. Report any problems you have with the antibiotics (rashes, nausea etc.) to your GP immediately. Do not stop taking your antibiotic unless your GP tells you to do so. Make sure you have enough antibiotics to finish the course so your treatment isn't interrupted.

If the infection is spreading you may need to go to hospital. Here you would have antibiotics straight into your blood stream to treat the infection quickly.

Potential complications

Sometimes if an infection becomes severe you may need an operation to clean out the wound.

If the infection is very severe an amputation may be needed to save healthy parts of the foot.

If your circulation is reduced you may be referred for an operation to increase blood supply to the ulcerated area.

If you discover any more problems, or if you are concerned about the treatment of your foot ulcer contact your local Podiatry Department or GP immediately for advice.

Contact details

Podiatry Department
Ards Community Hospital
Church Street
Newtownards
BT23 4AS
Tel: **(028) 9151 0240**

Podiatry Department
Bangor Community Hospital
Castle Street
Bangor
BT20 4TA
Tel: **(028) 9147 5137**

Podiatry Department
Ulster Hospital
Dundonald
BT16 1RH
Tel: **(028) 9048 4511 Ext. 2801**

Podiatry Department
Lisburn Health Centre
Linenhall Street
Lisburn
BT28 1LU
Tel: **(028) 9250 1214**

Podiatry Department
Pound Lane Clinic
12 - 14 Pound Lane
Downpatrick
BT30 6HY
Tel: **(028) 4461 3811**

**Looking after your
Foot Ulcer**

Podiatry Department

You have a foot ulcer. This means an area of skin has broken down and the tissue under it is now exposed.

In some people the skin does not heal very well and is likely to develop an ulcer or infection after a minor injury.

A foot ulcer can become infected and the infection may become severe. It is important that you look after your foot ulcer to prevent infection occurring.

If you smoke you are strongly advised to stop. Smoking affects your circulation and can lead to an amputation.

As you have a foot ulcer you will need regular podiatry treatment.

Podiatry treatment for your foot ulcer

Foot ulcers are sometimes hidden beneath hard skin and can gather dead tissue around them.

The podiatrist will need to remove this to help the ulcer to heal. This can cause the ulcer to bleed a little but this is completely normal.

Do not try to treat the ulcer yourself.

How to look after your foot ulcer

Do not touch the dressing unless you have been properly shown how to remove and replace it and you have suitable dressings to replace the one you are changing.

Continue to check your feet every day for any other problem areas or danger signs.

Danger signs

You should pay close attention to any of the following danger signs when checking your feet:

- Is there any new pain or throbbing?
- Does your foot feel hotter than usual?
- Are there any new areas of redness, inflammation or swelling?
- Is there any discharge?
- Is there a new smell from your foot?
- Do you have any flu-like symptoms?

Do not get the dressing wet

Getting the dressing wet may prevent healing or allow bacteria to enter the ulcer. This will cause more problems.

Moisturise the surrounding area of your feet

If your skin is dry apply a moisturising cream every day, avoiding areas of broken skin and the areas between your toes.

Avoid any unnecessary standing or walking. A wound cannot heal if it is constantly under pressure. Rest as much as possible and keep your foot up to help it heal. Use anything your podiatrist recommends or gives you to relieve pressure on your foot.

Footwear

You may be asked to wear a cast, a device to relieve pressure or a special shoe until your ulcer has healed. You should not wear any other footwear until your podiatrist advises you can wear your own shoes again.

Review appointments

Always attend your appointments to have your ulcer treated. You may need regular appointments until the wound has healed. Your appointment may be with a district nurse, a treatment room nurse or your podiatrist.