



Podiatry Department

Frequently Asked Questions

In order to meet the challenges of increasing demands as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing restrictions this has caused there will be changes to the service provided by the NHS Western Isles Podiatry team. Staff continue to provide full-time emergency and urgent care for patients. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers.

Q Why has the service changed?

A Due to the ongoing restrictions imposed by Covid-19 on social distancing and need for additional hygiene measures, we cannot see the same amount of people (reduced capacity). The Podiatry service must therefore operate differently and will need to prioritise emergency and urgent care.

Non-urgent foot problems will also be treated as capacity increases. Think of the service as you would your GP and request assistance only when there is a clinical need.

Q What is a Podiatry emergency and what is urgent?

A Emergencies are foot ulceration / wound, infection, concerns about circulation in your legs (look out for recent, or sudden, colour or temperature changes).

Urgent problems would be disabling pain or infected ingrown toenails that require surgery. Other problems are non-urgent.

Q What if I have a problem that is non-urgent?

A We have limited appointments to deal with non-urgent problems now capacity is gradually increasing. You should contact us when you have a problem with your foot that you can't manage or if you are experiencing regular foot pain (see below).

Q If I have a problem, how will I access Podiatry services?

A You can contact the service directly, as you did before, if you have a foot problem. This is called a Patient Initiated Review [PIR].

If you request a PIR, you will be asked to provide us with details and photographs (if possible) to help us quickly assess if your problem is an emergency, urgent or non-urgent (see summary).

Q I used to come regularly to Podiatry; will I be discharged?

A Existing patients will not be discharged but you will no longer be sent an appointment letter. You can request assistance if you develop a foot problem as explained above.

Q How will I manage my nails in future?

A There are things you or a relative/friend or carer can do to help keep your nails under control and keep you comfortable such as filing them regularly.

The Podiatry service can direct you to online resources for support e.g.

- www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/home/portals-and-topics/personal-footcare/education-for-care-providers.aspx
- How to care for your feet – <https://healthandcarevideos.uk/feet?videoid=1520>
- How to look after your toenails - <https://healthandcarevideos.uk/feet?videoid=1521>

Q When will my next diabetic annual assessment take place?

A This service has recommenced (June 2021) with reduced capacity. The Podiatry service will recall diabetes patients who require screening in order of priority based on those at the highest risk. Please check your feet daily and contact us if you have concerns.

Summary

Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ulceration (wound)• Infection (Redness, heat, swelling, pain, discharge from wound)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Concerns about circulation in your legs (differences in temperature, pain or colour).
Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily, disabling pain• Infected ingrown toenails• Non-painful foot ulcers or wounds
Non-urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily foot / ankle pain which is concerning but not disabling• Extremely thick or mis-shapen nails that are causing discomfort• Corns or callus which are causing discomfort

Further help and information

If in doubt, please call the Podiatry Service on 01851 708285 for advice on your own particular problem. If you contact us, please provide your name, address, date of birth and details of your foot problem which will assist us in prioritising emergency, urgent and non-urgent cases.

If possible, please email photographs and details to wi.podiatry@nhs.scot

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