Therapeutic footwear for diabetic patients

Information for patients
Orthotics
Why do I need therapeutic footwear?

You have been provided with therapeutic footwear because you have had a foot ulcer, or are at high risk of developing an ulcer or other foot problems caused by your diabetes. You may have one or more of the following problems:

- Bony changes in your feet, for example, bunions, clawed toes, Charcot deformity
- Permanently swollen feet
- Reduced or altered sensation (peripheral neuropathy)
- Unusually shaped feet
- Difficulty buying shoes from shops

What is therapeutic footwear?

Therapeutic footwear is designed to protect your feet and reduce the risk of you developing diabetic foot problems. Inside the shoes will be shock absorbing insoles, designed to support your feet evenly and reduce abnormal pressure. The footwear will be wider and deeper than shoes that you can buy in the shops so that there will be sufficient room for your feet and the insoles. The soles and heels may be adapted on the outside to improve the way you walk. You should wear new shoes for short periods at first to make sure they do not cause any redness caused by rubbing or pressure. If this occurs you should contact the orthotic department immediately.

When should I wear my footwear?

You are expected to wear the footwear all the time instead of shop bought footwear. They are an important part of your treatment and continuing to wear your old footwear will damage your feet.

Unsuitable shoes or shoes that don’t fit properly are the most common cause of foot problems in people with diabetes.
It is important to look after your feet while in the house and slippers are not suitable as they do not protect your feet adequately. The orthotist will discuss house shoes with you.

**How many pairs can I have?**

On average you will be given 2 pairs of shoes. The orthotist will discuss your requirements and may provide additional pairs if there is sufficient need, for example, for work or sport.

**Caring for your footwear**

The footwear provided is expensive, between £100 - £600, so please look after them. Please use shoe polish/cleaner on leather and refer to the washing instructions for other types of footwear.

The soles and heels need to be repaired before they wear down too much. Any cobbler can repair the soles and heels with whatever type of material you want. You can have them repaired with a different type of grip if you wish. The hospital will repair your shoes if they have specially adapted soles. You will be advised at the appointment if you are entitled to get them repaired at the hospital.

Check your shoes everyday before you put them on. Make sure that nothing sharp such as a pin, nail or glass has pierced the sole. Tap and shake each shoe and run you hand inside to check that no small objects such as stones have fallen in.

Do not remove the insoles from the shoes unless you are advised to do so, as they are an important part of the shoe fit and your foot protection.

**What happens next?**

Your podiatrist will check your footwear regularly but if you have any concerns please contact the orthotic department for a review. Your
footwear will be replaced when they are no longer able to be repaired or are deemed unsuitable for your feet.

We suggest that you have your footwear reviewed at least every 18 months by the orthotist to check it is still suitable. Please contact the orthotic department to make a review in ____________

Tell us what you think

Our team is always interested in your comments on the items provided and the service you receive.

Please feel free to phone or write to the manager, at the address below, if you wish to give us any feedback.

Orthotic Department

Mobility & Specialised Rehabilitation Centre
Northern General Hospital
Herries Road
Sheffield S5 7AU

- 0114 271 5807
  Opening times: Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm

Produced with support from Sheffield Hospitals Charity
Working together we can help local patients feel even better
To donate visit www.sheffieldhospitalscharity.org.uk Registered Charity No 1169762

Alternative formats can be available on request. Please email: alternativeformats@sth.nhs.uk

© Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust 2017
Re-use of all or any part of this document is governed by copyright and the “Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005” SI 2005 No.1515. Information on re-use can be obtained from the Information Governance Department, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals.
Email infogov@sth.nhs.uk