

Charcot Foot



Pride in our older people's and adult community services

Introduction

Diabetes is a lifelong condition which can cause foot problems. Some of these problems can happen because the nerves and the blood vessels supplying your feet are damaged. When the nerves in your feet are damaged (peripheral neuropathy), this can affect the feeling in your feet. When the blood vessels supplying your feet are damaged (peripheral vascular disease or ischaemia) this can affect the circulation in your feet. These changes can be very gradual and you may not notice them which is why it is important that your feet are checked annually by a suitably trained professional or assessed by a podiatrist (chiroprapist). You can then agree on a treatment plan to suit your needs.

What is Charcot foot

A serious complication of diabetes that can develop if you have peripheral neuropathy in your feet. Charcot foot can make the bones of your foot fragile, making them easy to break or dislocate with or without an injury to the foot. Most patients with Charcot cannot recall injuring their foot at all. If you have peripheral neuropathy in your feet, you may still be able to walk on the foot after injury without feeling any pain. If this happens, your foot can become severely deformed which may make it prone to ulceration. The shape of your foot will not return to normal, and this can make it very difficult to find shoes that fit properly.

Who will treat my foot?

Your Charcot foot should be treated and managed by a specialist diabetes foot service. This may be made up of a variety of health-care professionals or an individual with experience in treating this condition

Charcot foot can be a very serious condition and can be difficult to diagnose and treat, so it is very important that it is managed by experienced health-care professionals.

The important aim of treating Charcot foot is preventing permanent changes to the shape of your foot.

The Treatment

The only effective treatment is to reduce the weight on your foot or affected joint and prevent it from moving. This will need to be done with some form of cast (in the same way as if you had broken a bone).

How it is managed will depend on the method of treatment that your local specialist diabetes foot service prefers, namely:

- A plaster cast that your health-care professional will regularly review and change when needed.
- A cast walker with a prescription insole that your health-care professional will regularly review.

Both of these methods of treating Charcot foot have been proven to be successful, but you will need to closely follow the advice.

The Treatment

- You will need regular appointments with the diabetes specialist foot service or specialist podiatrist.
- You will have an x-ray when needed.
- You may need prescription footwear.

How can I help my condition

You should follow the medical advice you are given. It is essential you keep your weight off your foot as much as possible, to prevent permanent structural damage.

The following advice will help you manage your condition.

- Keep your diabetes under control by following the advice you have been given in the past.
- Keep checking your other foot as there will be more pressure on it and this could cause a further problem.
- Contact a member of the specialist diabetes service if you notice any change or are worried about your treatment in any way.

Your specialist diabetes foot service is here to support you, help you manage your Charcot foot, offer advice and answer any questions

When the condition has settled down

Even with the appropriate treatment, there may be some changes in the shape of your foot, and you may need to see an orthoptist for prescription footwear. You will also need to have regular check-ups with a podiatrist.

If you discover any problems with your feet contact your podiatry department or GP immediately. If they are not available, go to your nearest accident and emergency department. Remember, any delay in getting advice or treatment when you have a problem can lead to more serious problems.

Individual Advice

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Important contact numbers

Admin Hub – 0330 726 0077

Hinchingbrooke – 01480 416416

Hinchingbrooke Podiatry Clinic Room – 01480 416076

Hinchingbrooke Plaster Room – 01480 418713

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Patient Advice and Liaison Service

For information about CPFT services or to raise an issue, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on Freephone 0800 376 0775, or e-mail pals@cpft.nhs.uk

CPFT supports the **HeadtoToe Charity** – visit www.HeadToToeCharity.org for details on how you can help



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