

Patient information

Blisters (on your feet)

What is a blister?

Blisters result from stress within the layers of the skin. They are part of the body's natural protection from irritations such as a stone or foreign-body in the shoes, or by badly fitting footwear – too loose or too tight!

Blisters often heal on their own within a week. They can be painful while they heal, but you will not usually need to see a GP or a podiatrist.

Blood blisters appear when blood vessels in the skin have also been damaged. They're often more painful than a regular blister.

*Please note if you are **diabetic, have poor circulation, or are immunosuppressed**, please then seek help from your GP or Podiatrist as you are more prone to infection which may need additional treatment.*



How can I treat a blister?

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water prior to dressing your blister

To protect the blister and help prevent infection cover the area with a clean, dry non stick dressing e.g. Sterile gauze, melolin, sterile plaster or a hydrocolloid blister dressing (available from the chemist). This will lessen the pressure on the area and remove the irritation, it will also absorb the fluid should the blister burst.

Do not be tempted to 'burst' the blister, if it remains intact the area will remain less likely to get infected

If the blister does burst, clean the area with salt water or an antiseptic wipe / solution (available from the chemist) and cover the area with a clean, dry non stick dressing e.g. Sterile gauze, melolin, sterile plaster or a hydro colloid blister dressing.

Once the area has healed, then the overlying skin will become hard and come away on its own. Do not tear the skin off as this may damage the new skin forming underneath.

Do not wear the footwear that cause the irritation and blister to form, as this will prevent the blister from healing

Signs of an infected blister

Signs of an infected blister can be that the blister becomes hot and filled with green or yellow pus. The surrounding area becomes red and tender.



What should I do if the blister becomes infected?

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water prior to dressing your blister

To protect the blister and help prevent further infection cover the area with a clean, dry non stick dressing e.g. Sterile gauze, melolin, sterile plaster or a hydrocolloid blister dressing (available from the chemist).

You should then seek the help of a health care professional as you may need antibiotics to help control the infection.

How can I prevent blisters?

As blisters are the result of friction, there are a number of simple techniques that can prevent your walking, running or social activity being ruined by a blister:

- Ensure that you wear properly fitted footwear and hosiery that is deep enough to accommodate your toes.
- Ensure that the footwear is appropriate for the job / role that you are undertaking. For example, If you are going on a very long walk it would be very unwise to wear a flip flop as this will just rub and irritate your feet after a short period of time.
- Footwear that is too small or too long will rub and irritate your feet and can cause blisters
- Always wear socks of the right size as a cushion between your feet and footwear and change your socks daily

- When buying socks, choose socks made of fibres with good 'wicking' properties. Alternatively, look for special 'dual layer' socks where the inner layer moves with the foot, and the outer layer with the shoe - these help eliminate friction at the skin surface.
- Keep your feet dry and your toenails trimmed
- For very sweaty feet, use products that help control excessive moisture
- Immediately remove any foreign bodies that accumulate in socks and boots
- Ensure the tongue and laces of your boots are arranged correctly and evenly
- Check your feet regularly for any sign of rubbing and tenderness.

For more information

If you require any assistance then please contact
Podiatry services on
0300 1314536

Or email

Esh-tr.podiatryenquiries@nhs.net

Sources of information.

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust <https://www.esht.nhs.uk/service/podiatry/>
The Health and Care Professions Council www.hcpc-uk.org
The Royal College of Podiatry www.cop.uk
NHS choices www.nhs.uk

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4500 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
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The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Community Health & Integrated Care

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