

Podiatry Services in South Australia

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PODIATRY

The scope of Podiatry as defined by the Australasian Podiatry Council -

“podiatry deals with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of medical and surgical conditions of the feet and lower limbs. The conditions podiatrists treat include those resulting from bone and joint disorders such as arthritis and soft-tissue and muscular pathologies, as well as neurological and circulatory disease.”

Podiatrists need to be registered to practice

PODIATRY SERVICES

- The majority of metropolitan tertiary podiatry department service focus is on the management of patients with active issues or at “High Risk” of developing foot complications associated with the following medical conditions.
- Eligible criteria may include persons with:
 - Diabetes Mellitus
 - Peripheral Vascular Disease
 - Severe Rheumatoid Arthritis
 - Renal Disease
 - Immunosuppressive complications

What is the High Risk Foot?

- Any foot with an increased risk of ulceration, infection and subsequent amputation
- Individuals who are at high risk of developing foot problems are those with either:
 - Peripheral vascular disease
 - Peripheral neuropathy
 - Severe foot deformity
 - History of or a current foot wound

- National Association of Diabetes Centres in partnership with the
 - Australian Podiatry Association, 2000

Multi-Disciplinary High Risk Foot Clinics

- Multi-disciplinary clinics exist at:
 - TEQH, RAH, Lyell McEwin and FMC
- Typically core members are
 - Vascular surgeon,
 - Endocrine specialist,
 - Wound specialist nurse,
 - Podiatrist,
 - Orthotist / Prosthetist
- Some clinics may also involve Orthopaedics, ABPI (Doppler) nurses and Radiology services

Multi-Disciplinary High Risk Foot Clinics

- Some clinics focus on acute complex issues
 - ie infection, osteomyelitis, wound deterioration, new episodes of gangrene or pressure necrosis and amputation complications
- Some clinics focus more on chronic complex issues involving:
 - chronic non healing wounds, poorly controlled diabetes, non compliance and Charcot management

Multi-Disciplinary High Risk Foot Clinics

- Referral criteria and entry to a High Risk Foot Clinic may differ between sites but typically referral is by a member of the multi-disciplinary team
- Some services may have a pre-assessment clinic prior to referral to the multi-disciplinary clinic
- A triaging process is usually in place

What does Podiatry do in a High Risk Foot Clinic ?

- Foot assessment, education and management planning
- Regular wound bed preparation including debridement
- Manufacture of pressure relieving devices including:
 - Removable walking casts
 - Total contact casts
 - Accommodative insoles
 - Padded insoles
 - Felt padding
 - Footwear prescription and modification

What does Podiatry do in a High Risk Foot Clinic ?

- Appropriate dressing selections
- Ongoing maintenance and monitoring following wound resolution
- Work with multi-disciplinary teams of Vascular Surgeons, Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Surgeons, Endocrinologists, Wound Specialist Nurses, Orthotists, Diabetes Educators and Allied Health professionals to ensure the best possible outcome for clients with foot wounds
- Access pathology, medical imaging services and other medical and surgical specialties.

Footwear Assessment

- Length
- Width
- Stable heel counter
- Sole flexes at ball of foot only
- Appropriate for activity
- Socks/hosiery
- Wear them!

Treatment of Foot Wounds

- Control wound aetiology
 - Friction/pressure offloading & correct vascular insufficiencies
- Provide optimum wound healing environment
 - Appropriate dressings & debridement of non-viable tissue
- Provide patient education
- Maintain systemic health
 - Good BGL control, appropriate nutrition, regular exercise, no smoking, limit alcohol intake
- Manage contra lateral (other) foot
- Implement strategies to prevent recurrence
- Involve the patient in shared goal setting
- Use a team approach to care

Patient advice

- Check and clean feet daily
- Always wear something on the feet
- Never self treat corns or callus
- Don't use wart or corn cures
- Be careful of heaters and other sources of heat
- Administer first aid quickly if an injury occurs
- Dry between toes
- Cut nails straight across
- Wear appropriate footwear
- Seek expert advice for injuries & wounds, any concerns, or any foot changes

What to check for.....

- Callus
- Corns
- Blisters
- Rub marks or pressure
- Non healing sores/wounds
- Inflammation (redness, swelling, pain, heat)
- Dermatitis, dry or cracked heels
- In grown toe nails
- Subungual haematoma (blood under the nail)
- Other – anything that wasn't there yesterday!

Where to check

- Inter-digital spaces (in-between the toes)
- Plantar foot (sole)
- Dorsum (top)
- Bony prominences
 - Toes
 - Heel
 - Metacarpal Phalangeal joints
 - Ankle
 - Shin

How to access a High Risk Foot Clinic

- Requires referral from a medical officer
- Usually must have a health condition or other condition that places the patient at risk of developing a foot wound, including:
 - Peripheral neuropathy
 - Peripheral vascular disease
 - Severe foot deformity
 - History of foot ulcers
- Some acute podiatry services do not accept referrals from a General Practitioner or community Nurse (e.g. RDNS) – check referral requirements

Access to Podiatry Services at Flinders Medical Centre

- Accept a referral from within FMC
 - an internal referral
- Accept direct referrals from other podiatry services
 - public and private
- Accept direct referrals from RDNS

Podiatry Referrals

- Consider referral to a general podiatrist for any person with Diabetes who has not seen a podiatrist for 12 months
- General podiatry services are available through:
 - Private practitioners, Community organisations, University of SA, Non Government Organisations, Enhanced Primary Care (via GP)
- Consider prompt referral to a High Risk Foot Clinic for individuals who may be at risk of developing a foot ulcer, including those with:
 - Peripheral neuropathy
 - Peripheral vascular disease
 - Severe foot deformity
 - History of foot ulcers
- Consider immediate referral to a High Risk Foot Clinic for all individuals with a current foot ulcer

General Podiatry Services

- General Assessments
 - may include routine pathological nail and skin management etc
- Biomechanical Assessments
 - gait, footwear assessment, stretching, taping, orthoses etc
- Paediatric Assessments
 - as above
- Diabetes Assessments
 - risk factor identification and education etc)
- Nail surgery under local anaesthesia
- Sports Podiatry
- Geriatric Focus

Access to other podiatry services

- General podiatry services are not covered by Medicare
- Some podiatry services may be covered by Chronic disease programs or Enhanced Primary Care item numbers
 - Access through General Practitioner
- Some groups can access podiatry at Day Therapy Centres
 - GP referral, some patient cost, for those over 60
- Private services
 - no referral, some patient cost, may be some rebate from private health fund

Access to other podiatry services

- Contact the South Australian Podiatry Association for a list of local providers
- Ph (08) 8363 4144
- Website www.findapodiatrist.org
 - Australian Podiatry Council