
Ask how much it will cost

Remember to discuss any ongoing concerns about cost with your podiatrist.

If you are on a pension or a limited income, it may be possible for your GP to refer you to a podiatrist in a public hospital.

The patient's responsibilities

It is your responsibility to disclose a full medical history, and to provide the podiatrist with information about prescribed and non-prescribed medication and any involvement from other health professionals.

The podiatrist's responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the podiatrist to provide safe and competent treatment and care according to your medical history and appropriate diagnosis.

4. After your consultation

Do you need a follow-up appointment? If so, make an appointment before you leave.

Have you forgotten something the podiatrist told you? You can ring the surgery for more information or to clarify anything you are unsure of.

5. Unhappy with your treatment?

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of your experience with your podiatrist, there are a number of options for action:

Talk to your podiatrist - be specific about what you are unhappy with, or any questions you have. It may be helpful to bring a support person or advocate with you to help you express your concerns clearly.

Seek a second opinion - At any time after talking to your podiatrist, you may wish to seek a second opinion from another podiatrist or other health professional, or ask to be referred to a specialist.

To make a complaint: If you have a complaint about any health care service which you have not been able to resolve you can contact the **Health Complaints Commissioner**, who can investigate your complaint. This is a free, independent service. You can contact the Health Complaints Commission by phone: 1800 001 170, or email health.complaints@justice.tas.gov.au .

Alternatively, you may complain to the **Podiatrists Registration Board of Tasmania** which has a legislative role to ensure appropriate standards of podiatric practice are achieved and maintained. Notification of a complaint should be in writing - no specific form is required.

The Boards contact details are:

Address: PO Box 240 Claremont 7011

Fax: 03 6249 4292

Website: www.podregtas.com

You should also refer to the Board's Policy for Management of Complaints which can be downloaded and printed from the Board's website under the menu heading "Complaints".

The Podiatrists Registration Board of Tasmania would like to acknowledge the assistance of GP South in the content of this brochure. Cover photo courtesy of the Australasian Podiatry Council.



Getting the most from your visit to the podiatrist

Helpful hints for your consultation.

Podiatrists Registration Board of Tasmania

June 2008

What do Podiatrists do?

Podiatrists are university educated health professionals. They diagnose and treat specific foot and lower leg conditions including skin and nail disorders, corns, calluses and ingrown toenails. Foot injuries and infections gained through sport or other activities are also diagnosed and treated by podiatrists.

1. Preparing for your visit

Making an appointment

Do you need a longer appointment?

If you need to see the podiatrist for something more than routine, you can ask for a longer appointment.

Do you have complex needs?

If you or a person you care for has complex needs or challenging behaviour, it can be helpful to mention this to the practice staff so they can suggest the most appropriate time for your appointment.

Do you have mobility difficulties?

Let the practice know if you need assistance with access to the building.

How much will it cost?

You can ask if you will be out of pocket, and whether you need to pay anything on the day, so you can be prepared.

Is English not your first language?

You can request an interpreter when you book your appointment.

Before the visit

What do you want to tell and ask the podiatrist?

Make a list of any concerns and questions and put them in order of importance. Take the list with you to your appointment. The podiatrist might suggest you need additional appointments.

Do you want to take a support person with you?

This can be helpful if you think you might need help to communicate your concerns or have trouble hearing, understanding or remembering things.

2. Getting there

What to take with you

- your **Medicare card**
- any **concession cards** (eg. Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card, DVA Gold Card)
- your **private health fund membership** card.

Medical information: your list of concerns/symptoms, list of medications, recent relevant test results, x-rays, any records you hold and a referral from your GP (if you have one).

Running late

If you are running late or need to cancel, make sure you ring the surgery to let them know. Some surgeries may charge for missed appointments.

Is the podiatrist running late? To minimise waiting time, it can be helpful to ring the surgery to see if the podiatrist is running late. This will allow you to adjust your arrival time, or reschedule your appointment for another day.

When you arrive at the surgery

It is important to **let the reception staff know you have arrived**. There may be paperwork or other things to deal with before you see the podiatrist.

You can always ask the reception staff if you would like to speak to them in private.

3. During your consultation

Who will you see?

In the public sector, many podiatrists now have 'foot care assistants' working within the surgery. As part of your care, you will be assessed by a podiatrist and you may have routine and ongoing treatment provided by a foot care assistant as well as the podiatrist.

In the private sector, you will usually be treated by a podiatrist. Some podiatrists may also use a foot care assistant to help you with putting on shoes and socks/ stockings or the application of creams or dressings.

With the podiatrist

If this is your first visit to the practice, at the start of the consultation the podiatrist may ask about your general health status, medical and medication history, and involvement of other health professionals.

Explain your concerns and why you are there (refer to your list).

Take notes of important information, or **ask the podiatrist for a copy** of information about medication, treatment and exercises (especially any new treatment or complex instructions).

If you don't understand something - ask for clarification or more information. If you have a support person with you, check that they understand. **Don't be embarrassed** about asking questions, or asking the podiatrist to repeat or rephrase something. Podiatrists understand that when people are anxious about their health it can be harder to 'take in' information.

Referrals - If your podiatrist refers you to a specialist or to have medical tests, such as x-rays or ultrasounds, it is important to know why you are being referred and how long the podiatrist thinks you should need to wait to get an appointment. If you have trouble making an appointment within a reasonable time, contact your podiatrist for advice. Be sure you know **how** and **when** you will get the results of any tests.