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Corns and calluses

Corns and calluses are hard or thick areas of skin that can be painful.

They're usually not serious. There are things you can do to try to ease them yourself.

Check if you have a corn or callus

You mostly get corns and calluses on your feet, toes and hands.



Corns on a foot



Calluses on feet

Corns and calluses can also be tender or painful.

What you can do about corns and calluses

⚠ Important

If you have diabetes, heart disease or problems with your circulation, do not try to treat corns and calluses yourself.

These conditions can make foot problems more serious. Contact your GP or foot specialist (podiatrist).

Corns and calluses are not often serious. There are things you can do to try to get rid of them and stop them coming back.

Do

- ✓ wear thick, cushioned socks

- ✓ wear wide, comfortable shoes with a low heel and soft sole that do not rub
- ✓ use soft insoles or heel pads in your shoes
- ✓ soak corns and calluses in warm water to soften them
- ✓ use a pumice stone or foot file to remove hard skin regularly
- ✓ moisturise to help keep skin soft

Don't

- ✗ do not try to cut off corns or calluses yourself
- ✗ do not walk long distances or stand for long periods
- ✗ do not wear high heels or tight pointy shoes
- ✗ do not go barefoot

Your pharmacist can help

You can ask a pharmacist about:

- heel pads and insoles
- over-the-counter products to treat corns and calluses
- different kinds of pain relief

When to contact your GP

Contact your GP

if you think you have a corn or callus and:

- you have diabetes
- you have heart disease or problems with your circulation
- it bleeds, or has any pus or discharge
- it has not improved after treating it at home for 3 weeks
- the pain is severe or stopping you doing your normal activities

Treatment for corns and calluses

Your GP can:

- look at your foot to see if it's a corn or callus
- give you antibiotics if a corn or callus is infected
- refer you to a foot specialist if they think you need further treatment

Treatment from a foot specialist

A foot specialist, such as a podiatrist, may be able to offer treatments such as:

- cutting away the corn or callus
- patches to help soften the hard skin so it can be removed
- specially made soft pads or insoles to take pressure off the painful area of your foot

Common causes of corns or calluses

Corns and calluses are caused by pressure or rubbing of the skin on the hands or feet.

For example, from:

- wearing high heels, uncomfortable shoes or shoes that are the wrong size
- not wearing socks with shoes
- lifting heavy weights
- playing a musical instrument

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