



Podiatric Practice in Pandemic times

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Essential service

- Podiatry is an **essential medical service** in the same way that other health professionals are, e.g. Dentists, Physiotherapists, Optometrists and others.
- The appropriate assessment and treatment of foot pathologies is important for health, mobility and well being of our patients.
- Foot pathologies when left untreated can escalate to problems which need inpatient care.

How to assess in 'lockdown'

- We suggest that each practitioner utilize digital technologies as much as possible when assessing /triaging patients.
- Use email
- Use photography – be cautious not to use personal telephone contacts or emails for this unless it is your normal practice.
- Consider the use of online teleconferencing platforms to make the assessment if you feel comfortable doing so.
- When assessing/ triaging ensure that you are familiar of the pertinent medical history of the patient in relation to the pathology which they complain of

Assessment tools

- Consider using an assessment tool to help when you are triaging patients. (many available)
- Continue to utilise existing referral pathways for those patients who have acute ulceration or infection
- We suggest the following questions may be helpful
 - Is this problem affecting your daily life?
 - Is the problem significant enough that you have had to take pain relief?
 - Has this problem led to infection and/or breakdown in the past?
- Our advice is to consider what you as a podiatrist will add to the management of their current situation balanced against the individual risk of the patient before offering face to face treatment.
- Document the discussion and the decisions you made with your patient.

When physical treatment is appropriate

- Check in with the patient 24 hours before seeing them and check they still want to receive treatment.
- Ensure that they or any members of their household have no symptoms of Covid-19
- When arranging an appointment it is important to explain what will happen and how – this may be different than when they attended in the past
- Patients should attend for treatment on their own where possible – the person who accompanies them is advised to wait outside the clinic.

Preparing the treatment room

- We would recommend sufficient time between appointments in order to avoid any overlap and allow time for infection control procedures.
- Ensure all non-essential items are removed from the room and waiting area (if using)
- Place signage at the entrance to the practice and ensure a further verbal check for fever or symptoms of respiratory illness and CoVID-19
- Promote hand hygiene upon arrival (signage, verbal reminders and provide hand cleaning facilities).
- Promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (signage, provide tissue and bins)..
- Ensure you are following local infection control procedures and have appropriate personal protective equipment for your safety and the service user.
- We would suggest that you avoid aerosol generating procedures at the current time (Wet spray drills or Versajet)