

How can podiatrists help with Xerosis (Dry skin)?



Many people experience dry skin (Xerosis) from time to time, but patients on the certain cancer therapies may experience severe Xerosis. Xerosis can cause the skin to split especially around the heels and cause painful plaques of thickened hard skin (callus) and corns. Routine podiatry will help to reduce fissures and callus through debridement (finely skilled scalpel reduction of dead skin) and leave healthy pain free skin. Frequent use of ointments to hydrate the skin is also recommended. Ointments that soften skin cells (keratolytics)

such as salicylic acid 6% with a urea base of 10%-40%, can be applied. If the skin becomes white and rubbery stop using the cream for a few days. Our podiatrists are able to advise certain creams that help and can monitor the skin closely.

Avoidance of the risk of skin breakdown can arise in patients with thin and sensitive skin such as [diabetic patients](#), therefore close monitoring of the skin is paramount. For diabetics, please check to see if the particular cream you would like to use is safe to use on diabetic skin. The following regular foot problems include:

- Changes within the foot caused by new footwear problems.
- Painful walking and weight bearing.
- Changes to tissue integrity i.e skin and nails
- Painful arthropathy.
- Basic self care and daily life activities are difficult to engage (e.g. cutting toenails or caring for the skin)

Podiatric-medical intervention is paramount to avert the rapid development of complications associated with the undesirable effects of anticancer therapy. By working in partnership with the patient and their cancer team many concerns can be resolved. It is important when seeing either your cancer team or podiatrist that they are encouraged to liaise with each other to give you the most successful outcome of treatment. Always speak to your podiatrist about any problems you are noticing on your foot no matter how trivial you think they are as they are the specialists of the feet just like dentists are the specialist for your teeth.

Please read other articles by Afni Shah-Hamilton (Tiptoe Foot Care) & David R Tollafield published in Footlocker (www.Consultingfootpain.co.uk) by Busypencilcase Communications Ltd

Topical articles

- Issue 1. Cancer care, feet and podiatry
- Issue 2. Conditions affecting feet caused by medication to treat cancers

Supplementary facts and podiatry from Afni Shah-Hamilton

- How can podiatry help with peripheral neuropathy?
- How can podiatrists help with the toxic effect of medication on nails?
- How can podiatrists help with hand-foot syndromes?