

Fact Sheet

Smelly Feet

What is a Smelly Feet?

Smelly feet or foot odor is a common condition and can be embarrassing and uncomfortable.

Causes

Sweat, bacteria and/or fungus is the cause of foot odour. Feet smell as the foot sweats and is trapped inside footwear. It is the interaction of these two factors, along with bacteria and fungus that cause the smell.

Feet have more sweat glands than any other part of the body. They sweat profusely and cannot evaporate (like it can on the hands) due to being enclosed in footwear. Cosy, damp and warm environments (i.e. shoes) act as a haven for bacteria and fungal growth.

Preventing Smelly Feet

It is relatively easy to control most cases of smelly feet by taking a number of preventative good foot hygiene steps to reduce bacteria to low levels:

- Bathe your feet daily in lukewarm water with a mild soap and dry thoroughly, especially between the toes.
- Change your socks at least once a day (change shoes as well if you sweat a lot)
- Dust your feet frequently with a foot powder (always wipe between toes to remove excess moisture so that it does not 'clog' between the toes.
- Treat bacterial and fungal infections with appropriate creams. Your podiatrist can advise you of these.



Highett
Podiatry

Fact Sheet

Smelly Feet

Preventing Smelly Feet (cont.)

- Wear suitable shoes made of leather, canvas, mesh or other materials that let the feet breathe. Avoid plastic materials or solid synthetic in the upper or lining of shoes.
- Choose sports shoes designed to allow air flow around the feet.
- Wear socks with shoes where possible.
- Socks made from natural fibres (wool and cotton) are more suited to controlling foot odour. Synthetics such as nylon and polyester retain moisture.
- Avoid wearing the same pair of shoes two days in a row – they need time to dry out.
- Remove innersoles from shoes to help with the drying.

Treatment

If the preventative measures above for foot odour do not help, then further investigations by a Podiatrist is recommended.



Hihett
Podiatry

ALWAYS CONSULT A TRAINED PROFESSIONAL

The information in this resource is general in nature and is only intended to provide a summary of the subject matter covered. It is not a substitute for medical advice and you should always consult a trained professional practising in the area of medicine in relation to any injury or condition. You use or rely on information in this resource at your own risk and no party involved in the production of this resource accepts any responsibility for the information contained within it or your use of that information.