Feet matter

If you have a rheumatological condition, such as arthritis, you could develop foot problems.

Rheumatological conditions affect the parts of the body that allow us to move - such as muscles, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, bones, joints and spinal discs - called the musculoskeletal system.

Problems in one part of the musculoskeletal system can lead to problems in other parts of the body too, such as the feet.

For example, your feet might start to hurt if you have a painful hip or knee that affects the way you walk. Or you may find you can’t look after your feet yourself because you can’t reach them, or because your hands are affected.

Whatever the cause of your foot problems, there are ways of getting help to improve your quality of life.

Find out more

**Arthritis Care** works for and with people with arthritis
www.arthritiscare.org.uk
Tel: 0808 800 4050

**Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance** provides a collective voice for the UK’s arthritis and musculoskeletal community
www arma uk.net
Tel: 0207 842 0910

**Arthritis Research Campaign (arc)** investigates causes and treatment, and provides information, including Feet, footwear and arthritis booklet
www.arc.org.uk
Tel: 0870 850 5000

**British Footware Association (BFA)** information about hard-to-find footwear, eg orthopaedic
www.britfoot.com
Tel: 01933 229 005

**National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (UK)** support and information
www.rheumatoid.org.uk
Tel: 0800 298 7650

**Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists (SCP)** information on foot problems, footwear and finding a podiatrist
www.feetforlife.org
Tel: 020 7234 8620

www.prcassoc.org.uk/standards-project

**Feet first**

What the NHS can do for you if you have problem feet
NHS foot health services are not the same across the UK, and everyone’s needs are different. But if you have bone and joint problems and trouble with your feet, you should still be able to get the help you need, when you need it. Your first port of call should be your GP or, if you have one, your rheumatologist.

You should be able to get:

- different types of advice and support at different times
- services that help you manage and live with your condition at home, at work and at play.

The Podiatry Rheumatic Care Association has written a set of foot health standards, so you can know what to expect from the NHS if you have a musculoskeletal condition and associated problems with your feet.

What you can expect

Any of the health professionals caring for you – your GP, hospital doctor, nurse or podiatrist for example – should know about the foot health standards, and that you need:

- clear information that helps you understand the link between your musculoskeletal condition and your foot problems
- an assessment of your foot health needs
- the help you need to look after your feet yourself as far as possible
- your foot health needs reassessed if things change
- the care you need from appropriate professionals - this could be a podiatrist, consultant, GP, nurse, orthotist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, or a combination of these
- referrals to the right professionals as and when you need them.

If you think the foot health services you are getting do not measure up, check out the full standards document on www.prcassoc.org.uk/standards-project.