

FAQs for Patients

These are some commonly asked questions asked by patients.

1) Can Podiatrists treat patients currently?

Yes. All Podiatrists are Health and Care Professions Council registrants and they, alongside their support staff, are able to work. Many Podiatrists have been working either within the NHS during the pandemic to support vital services or keeping their private practices open for those patients who are most in need. They are considered a keyworker as they are a key part of the healthcare workforce.

2) Can Podiatrists do home visits currently?

Yes. Podiatrists are allowed to do home visits if they wish. They will likely ask you to be the only one in the room when they visit and will wear Personal Protective Equipment to reduce transmission. They can still leave the waste from their treatment in your bin (it may assist if you could provide a carrier bag for it to go in (do not touch the waste for 72hrs). They may ask if they can use your handwashing facilities. It would be helpful if you could provide them with kitchen roll or similar to dry their hand on.

3) Do Podiatrists have to wear Personal Protective Equipment?

Yes. You will notice that your podiatrist will be wearing an apron, gloves, facemask and sometimes eye protection such as a visor. They have to follow strict PPE guidelines to make sure you and they are safe during your treatment.

4) My Podiatrist has asked me to wear a facemask or face covering - why?

The government is advising people to wear masks or face coverings in certain situations. Your podiatrist may deem it necessary for you to wear a mask or face covering during your visit. This is so any accidental coughs or sneezes are caught and helps to protect the staff and other patients from potential transmission from asymptomatic patients. Your podiatrist will advise you on what to do with the mask or face covering and how to discard it afterwards.

5) My Private Podiatrist has raised their prices due to Covid-19 is that appropriate?

Yes. All podiatrists review their overheads on a regular basis and it is not uncommon for appointment costs to rise as external costs do as it would in any business. The global shortage of certain medical supplies has resulted in increased costs for your podiatrist as they provide you with the high standard of care you are used to. They will advise you of the cost of your treatment in advance of the appointment.

6) My Podiatrist is open but I still can't get an appointment – why?

Whilst many Podiatrists are seeing expanded categories of patients, they will have a large backlog of patients and therefore they will need to prioritise urgent cases. Please be patient at this time, but if you are concerned about your foot health, then contact your podiatrist for advice and to see if you need to

be seen sooner. You should also be aware some practices may not have all their staff return to work at the same time and therefore may not be able to offer their normal range of services.

7) My Podiatrist is closed – why?

Some Podiatrists have not yet opened. This may be because they are shielding or have other personal reasons for not being able to be open. Your Podiatrist should have advice on who to contact if you need footcare during this time on their answerphone or website. If you need urgent help, then you can contact your GP or 111 for advice.

8) What measures are Podiatrists doing to keep patients and themselves safe during this time?

Patient and staff safety continues to be a crucial consideration to your podiatrist. Every practice is set up differently so not all practices will be doing the same things but you may see your podiatrist:

- Staggering appointments so patients are not in the waiting room at the same time.
- Spacing waiting room chairs out so they are more than 2m apart
- Screens around reception area and sometimes in the clinic room
- Additional handwashing or alcohol hand gel stations being offered to patients
- Patients waiting outside or in their car until their appointment is due
- Additional PPE being worn
- Additional disinfecting between patients
- Magazines and leaflets not being readily available in waiting rooms so cross contamination is reduced.
- Checking patient's temperature on arrival
- Phoning patients before appointments to check for symptoms
- Not taking cash and using contactless payments more

9) I am shielding can a podiatrist visit me?

Yes. You can still receive healthcare if you are shielding. Ideally this should be at home, so you don't have to travel. If, however your podiatrist does not offer home visits then you can see them in their clinic as they wear PPE and have to follow infection control guidelines. We would suggest you travel straight to the clinic and back again whilst avoiding public transport.

10) Can I be treated in my garden?

This may be a possibility. There are general infection control issues with being in the garden and if it is windy things may blow about. We would suggest discussing this with your podiatrist so they can decide with you depending on your medical and foot health status and need.