

# Calvary Community Care

## Look After Your Feet

Falls and Injury Prevention - How not to fall for it



Over the years everyone's feet change shape, lose padding on the sole and undergo skin changes.

Early advice and treatment is best.

Feet should be looked after, and a podiatrist should be seen regularly if feet need special care, particularly if you have diabetes. There are some simple things you can do to help yourself stay steady on your (well cared for) feet.

### Foot Care

**Wash and Dry:** especially between the toes..

**Inspect Feet:** looking for changes e.g. blisters, sores, corns, calluses, fungal infections (e.g. tinea) cracked skin, thin fragile skin changes in skin colour.

**Foot problems.** Observe/monitor foot pain or other foot problems e.g. bunions, swelling, numbness, ingrown toenails, thick nails, fungal nail infections.

**Look after Nails and Skin** by cutting toenails regularly and moisturising skin

**Protect by** preferably wearing wool or cotton socks and well-fitting footwear (see next page) suitable for activities undertaken.

**Podiatrists (Chiropodists)** can assist with cutting of toenails and undertake further assessment of any problems.

### Which sort of shoes increase the risk of falls?

Some footwear can increase the risk of slips, trips and falls by making you more prone to poor balance and bad gait (the way we walk), or by making it difficult to judge surface friction and distance from the floor.

Examples of unsuitable footwear include:

- Loose, worn or backless slippers/shoes
- Slip-on shoes, such as sling backs or thongs which can slip and cause tripping
- Shoes with slippery or worn soles, can cause slipping, especially on a wet surface
- Shoes with a heel higher than one inch, or with a narrow heel, as these can make the foot unstable and can cause the ankle to turn/roll

# Shoe Safety Checklist

Consider the following questions when thinking about your shoe safety.\*

**Do your shoes fit well?**

(shoes that are too tight or too loose can be dangerous)

**Do you mostly wear flat shoes?**

(high heels can be very dangerous)

**Does the sole of your shoe bend at the ball of your foot, not the arch?**

(this is better for walking on uneven surfaces)

**Does the sole have a bit of bounce?**

(this helps prevent jarring to your foot)

**Does the sole have some grip?**

**Does the heel have a rounded edge?**

(sharp shoe edges can slip easily on wet or shiny surfaces)

YES	NO

\*'Stay on your feet'® Shoe Safety Checklist' developed by the WA Injury Council Control.

## Prevent falls with Safe Shoes

**Firm Heel Cup**

provides support when walking

**Laces, buckles or velcro fastenings**

hold the foot more firmly

**Wide & deep toe pocket**

allows plenty of room for the toe movement and comfort

**Low wide heels with rounded edge**

provides more contact with ground & preventing slipping

**Correct length**

allows normal foot function

**Thin soles with tread**

enables your feet to 'read' the underlying surface and prevent slipping



Need support? Calvary Community Care can support safe, independent living at home with a variety of services and expert advice. Call 1300 66 00 22 for more information.

# Who can help?

**Your doctor** can refer to other health professionals for services for which you are eligible.

**Podiatrists** (known as Chiropodists in some countries) treat foot problems, foot pain and advice on foot care and footwear. No referral is necessary.

<https://www.podiatry.asn.au/foot-health-resources/foot-health-resources>

**Independent Living Centres** provide information about products and services to help people remain independent and improve their quality of life.

[www.ilcaustralia.org.au](http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au) or ph: 1300 885 886

**My Aged Care** gives you access to a range of information and support which can be delivered to you in your home. It is for people 65yrs+, or 50yrs+ for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

[www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or ph: 1800 200 422

## References

### **Australian Commission on Safety & Quality in Healthcare**

*'Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls. Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care 2009'*

<http://bit.ly/2o3AJZv>

### **HealthDirect Australia**

*'How to take steps to prevent falls'*

<http://bit.ly/2nyyPvO>

### **Revised and re-published by the Commonwealth of Australia 2011**

*'Don't Fall For It - A guide to preventing falls for older people'*

<http://bit.ly/2oSBy4k>

### **Injury Control Council of WA**

*'Stay on your Feet WA'*

<http://bit.ly/2nRx9PX>

### **SA Falls and Injury Prevention Fact Sheet 6**

*'Comfy feet go a long way'*

<http://bit.ly/2owaziV>

### **Dept Health.**

*'Falls Prevention from the Ground Up...Feet and Footwear'*

<http://bit.ly/2o4fGpK>

### **Prevent Falls with Safe Shoes**

<http://bit.ly/2n6hNKj>