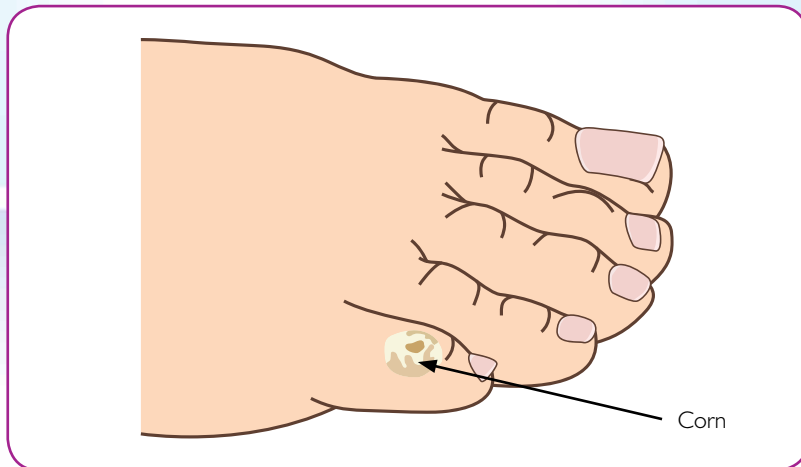


HYPERKERATOSIS



WHAT IS IT?

Hyperkeratosis literally means an excessive amount of keratin production which is the main protein component in skin. Essentially, it is an over production of the outer layer of your skin which leads to corns and callus. This is a very common problem and is caused by putting too much pressure through certain parts of your foot. This can be due to poor footwear choices or the position of your bones in your foot or both.

Corns can be extremely painful as they are a cone shaped piece of hard skin, the tip of which can press on nerves and deep tissue in the foot causing pain. Some corns (called 'soft corns') can also appear in between the toes. Callus is not usually as painful unless it becomes very thickened or cracked (which most often happens around the edge of the heel).

DIAGNOSIS

Callused skin and corns can be identified easily as they both have a yellow tint to them. Corns can often be mistaken for a plantar wart or verruca. To distinguish

between a corn and a verruca there are some tests your podiatrist can do. A corn is painful if you push it. A verruca will hurt if you pinch it.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

There are lots of ways a podiatrist can help you to reduce your corns and callus production. Initially, the corn or callus can be removed using a scalpel.

This is normally a totally painless procedure unless your corn is very deep and has nerves closely associated with it. Removing the hard skin will reduce the pressure over the area and therefore reduce the pain levels when you stand on it. The podiatrist may also be able to apply padding to the foot with holes cut out in the areas where the corns are situated or in between the toes to offload pressure. These pads are made from felt and can be adhered directly to the skin or made to be replaceable. In some circumstances an orthotic insole might be prescribed if the podiatrist

thinks the foot position can be altered to reduce callus production or help to prevent the corn formation. You can also help yourself when it comes to callus and corns. If you have callus on your heel, using a good quality foot file on the skin when it is very dry will help to keep the callus under control. After bathing or showering you should then apply an emollient or moisturiser to keep the skin supple and soft to prevent it from hardening. Your podiatrist can recommend a good emollient for your skin type.

Treatments to help you remove the corn yourself are available from pharmacies. If you suffer from diabetes or circulatory disorders it is important that you do not self treat but seek professional medical attention.



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