

## Sharing the care: getting to know your team



### Podiatry

Podiatry is the registered health profession that deals with conditions affecting the human foot and lower limb. Members of the public and referrers can check the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) register for registration details of all podiatrists.

Podiatry has the same registration standards as medicine and nursing. As a result all podiatrists must have professional indemnity insurance, meet continuing professional development requirements and adhere to the Board's Code of Conduct.

Podiatrists provide care for all members of the family from the cradle to the grave i.e. from the youngest to the oldest members of the family.

Eighty percent of podiatrists work in private practice including aged care. Podiatrists work in community health centres and hospitals as part of the public health system, in a reduced but very important scope of practice for the management of diabetic foot disease, otherwise known as high risk foot.

#### Working with other health professionals

Podiatrists work closely with General Practitioners and other allied health professionals for complex care, typically physiotherapists, dietitians, exercise physiologists, chiropractors, footwear suppliers, sports coaches and trainers.

Requests for medical summaries is a sign of an effective podiatrist as these are required to gain an understanding of the medical, surgical, social and pharmaceutical factors that are to be considered when delivering care.



#### Referral information

A GP referral is not required to attend a private podiatrist, however a referral is required for the patient to claim DVA benefits or a Medicare rebate via a Team Care Arrangement.

With your referral try to be specific about the reason for the referral and what feedback you would like from the podiatrist, including a summary of the medical history and the list of prescribed medicines.

Pathways for referral include:

- MBS chronic disease team care arrangement
- Private health cover
- Public hospital services, visit SpotOnHealth Health Pathways for localised pathways in Brisbane South <https://spotonhealth.healthpathwayscommunity.org>

#### Find a private practice podiatrist

Find a podiatrist on the Australian Podiatry Association website

<https://www.podiatristsqld.com.au/find-a-podiatrist>



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## Costs

Patients with complex chronic conditions can access a Team Care Arrangement that may include an out of pocket expense (Medicare rebate is \$52.95 as at June 2018). The patient should be encouraged to ask about fees when making the appointment. Some podiatrists will 'bulk bill' patients who are referred for a Medicare related appointment, however it is best to recommend that the patient enquires at the time of making the appointment. The exception is for DVA patients where there is no 'out of pocket expenses'.

People with private health insurance that includes podiatry, are likely to have out of pocket expenses for consultations and orthotics. Encourage the patient to check with their private health insurance fund and the podiatry practice.

For people accessing public Hospital and Health Services, there are no fees - however they must meet referral criteria.

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### There are three main areas of practice within podiatry:

- **Diabetes**
- **Paediatrics**
- **Sports and biomechanics**

Podiatrists are experts with the use of a scalpel to debride corns, callouses and wounds and as a result must have high knowledge of infection control within their practice. This is even more relevant for podiatrists offering more invasive care such as wound debridement and nail surgery under a local anaesthetic.

All podiatrists will have an interest in 'the painful foot', the management of skin conditions and toenail pathology and deliver education and advice on footwear.

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## Further information

- Australian Podiatry Association <https://www.podiatry.org.au/>

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## Your feedback

The video series that accompanies this fact sheet has been developed to assist health professionals to increase their knowledge and awareness of the many diverse allied health disciplines, sub-specialties, and referral pathways in primary care to improve patient outcomes in our community.

If you have any questions or feedback please email: [alliedhealth@bsphn.org.au](mailto:alliedhealth@bsphn.org.au)

