

Corns

Information Sheet

Corns are small, defined areas of thickened skin that can be as small as 2mm. They tend to be conical in shape, pressing into the deeper layers of the foot. There are three main types of corns.

Hard Corn

This is the most common type of corn and presents as a compressed patch of hard, yellow (pale or dark) skin with a dense core. Hard corns are often present on the bottoms, tops or sides of the feet, as well as on the toes. When touched, they feel like a hard lump, and are often described as "walking on a stone". They can be extremely painful and frustrating. Hard corns are medically known as Heloma Durum.

Soft Corn

Soft corns are mostly found between the toes. They have a whiter and softer appearance compared to hard corns. Their softness is from absorbing moisture into the skin, such as from sweat or not drying the feet well after showering. Soft corns are medically known as Heloma Molle.

Seed Corn

Seed corns are much smaller and shallower than hard or soft corns, often likened to the size of a sesame seed. These tiny bumps often occur on the bottom of the heel or ball of the foot and frequently present in clusters. Seed corns can be painless or painful and are medically known as Heloma Millare.

The Symptoms of Corns

Aside from circular white/yellow patches of skin on the foot, symptoms include:

- Redness
- Tenderness
- Localised pain that can range from mild to severe
- The feeling that you're walking on a stone

What causes corns to develop?

Any causes of repeated or increased pressure against the skin of the foot can encourage a corn to develop. This can include:

- The foot rubbing against the shoe
- An altered foot shape that puts more pressure on certain bones and areas of the foot
- Increasing the frequency of weight-bearing activities that increases the overall pressure on areas of the foot regularly
- Wearing high heels that place greater pressure on the forefoot
- The thinning and lowered protection of the skin, as naturally occurs during ageing

Managing corns at home

Effectively managing corns must start with first removing the corn, and then preventing them from coming back or reducing the speed at which they return. Improving the **footwear** that you wear to options that offer more support, cushioning, and less high-pressure areas is a great start.

While over the counter corn pads are available from the pharmacy to help remove the existing corn, we cannot recommend using these as they contain an acid that can cause a chemical burn on the healthy skin surrounding the corn. If you have a systemic condition like diabetes, you should definitely avoid using corn pads and see your Podiatrist for treatment, guidance and best long-term outcomes.

When to see a Podiatrist & how they can help

Your Podiatrist can safely and effectively remove corns in the clinic in one appointment. In most cases, this will alleviate the painful symptoms immediately. This is achieved using a scalpel to scoop out the corn and this procedure is often painless and very quick.

Your Podiatrist can then use off-loading padding and digital corn devices to continue to alleviate pressure from the area and reduce the risk or rate of its return. They will discuss your footwear and other lifestyle factors to help with the long-term management of your corns.

As corns and warts are often mistaken for one another, yet have very different treatment approaches, we recommend that you receive a diagnosis from your Podiatrist before commencing any treatment.

Disclaimer: This document is an informative guide only and is not a tool for diagnosis or a replacement for a consultation with a Podiatrist. If you suspect that you have corns, we recommend that you see your Podiatrist for an accurate diagnosis and an appropriate management plan. Referrals are not required to see a Podiatrist.