

Blisters

Fact Sheet

Blisters are the puffy, fluid-filled pockets that develop in the top layer of the skin - and there's a good chance that you have already had at least one blister at some point in your life. They often appear after wearing tight or new shoes that rub against the skin around your feet and develop very quickly, along with the pain they cause when they're pressed against.

What are the symptoms?

The first thing you'll notice is the appearance of a raised 'bubble' in the skin. If this bubble is intact, it is likely to be filled with a clear fluid. If it has been pressed or rubbed against before you notice it, the skin covering the bubble will likely have broken and will appear loose and thin, with no fluid beneath. Other accompanying symptoms can include:

- Redness
- Itching
- Tenderness
- Pain

Heading 2: What causes blisters?

Those who walk and run long distances won't be strangers to foot blisters. When any skin undergoes friction, such as from repetitively rubbing against the inside of a shoe or from spending long hours on the feet, the top-most layers of skin can separate and a blister can form. Other causes include:

- Skin burns
- Insect bites
- Infections
- Excess moisture or sweating
- Excess pressure

- Allergies
- Trauma

Caring for blisters at home

While you usually don't need to see a health professional for a blister, we recommend doing so if your pain is severe, your symptoms worsen, or the cause is something other than friction or moisture (e.g. infection, burns). However you decide to manage your blister, you must take hygiene protocols to reduce the risk of infection.

Treating blisters involves both managing the current blister and taking the right measures to reduce the risk of more blisters forming in the future. If the skin 'bubble' is still intact and fluid-filled, try to keep it this way and allow your body to reabsorb the fluid and heal the blister. This may take up to 14 days. Avoid wearing tight footwear that will irritate or burst the blister as that can leave it vulnerable to infection or further damage. When running or walking, wear comfortable, well-fitted shoes and clean and dry socks.

If you know that you cannot protect your blister from bursting, you can drain it using a sterile needle after you have applied antiseptic. Do not remove the top layer of the skin in this case - your body will heal and repair this.

If the blister has already burst, apply antiseptic to the area and keep the area covered with a dressing. Avoid getting this wet. Change the dressing daily and if it does get wet or traps excess moisture.

When to see a Podiatrist & how they can help

See your Podiatrist if:

- The appearance of your blister has not improved after 7-10 days
- The pain or symptoms continue to worsen
- The blister appears infected (may become swollen or have yellow/green exudate)
- More blisters appear without reason

- The blister is caused by something other than friction or moisture (e.g. burn or infection)

Your Podiatrist will help you manage the symptoms you are experiencing, like addressing your infection or pain, and optimise your path to effective healing. Your Podiatrist will also identify any further problems and refer appropriately where required.

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're worried about the appearance of your blister, your symptoms worsen or persist, we recommend that you see your Podiatrist for an accurate diagnosis and an appropriate management plan. Referrals are not required to see a Podiatrist.