



FOOT

Fabulous



Dr Katharin von Gavel

Footlogix, developed by Dr Katharin von Gavel in 2007, blends technology & science with stunning salon products to give transformational results to feet. **ALEX FOX** takes a look at two foot issues & how to approach them...

Foot fungus

There are a number of fungal organisms that cause fungal infections, but the most common is called dermatophyte. This microscopic fungus is normally found on the body alongside other fungi and bacteria. When the toenails and skin are intact, the feet are adequately protected from infection, however, when the skin and toenails are damaged or broken, the fungus can enter. The body's warm, moist environment is ideal for growth and the fungi will naturally overpopulate - resulting in a fungal infection.

The most obvious way to get a break in the skin is from an injury or cut that acts like a portal of entry for the fungal infection. However, most fungal entry points are less obvious. Moist, wet skin macerates, or softens and breaks down, making it vulnerable to the normally harmless fungus already present on the skin's surface. For this reason, the feet and

toenails are more prone to fungal infections than fingernails because the feet are often confined to shoes where they're exposed for long periods to moisture from perspiration. However, moisture doesn't have to be present for a fungal infection to start. Extremely dry skin can develop small micro-tears where fungus can inhabit the skin and multiply.

Fungal infections are more common in older adults because the skin and nails are typically drier and more brittle, allowing fungus to enter via cracks on the surface. Those with weakened immune systems and reduced circulation may also have a greater risk of developing a foot fungus. When fungus infects the skin of the foot and in between the toes, it's called *tinea pedis* or Athletes' Foot. When fungus enters the toenails, it's referred to as a nail fungus or *onychomycosis*.

Healthy, intact skin is the best protection against a fungal infection, so keeping

feet clean, dry and adequately moisturised (to prevent cracking) goes a long way towards preventing foot fungus. Feet should be completely dried after bathing and clean socks worn.

Toenail fungus

This may begin as a white or yellow spot under the free edge of the toenail. As the infection goes deeper, when someone is suffering, the nail may darken and yellow and become thick, crumbly and ragged. When the area between toes is infected, the skin will appear red, flaky and scaly and will often peel, crack, itch and burn. Often seen in diabetics and seniors, the 'rough skin' that presents as a dry heel may also be a fungal infection. Sometimes an odour will be present and in severe cases, the feet can blister and develop sores. Fungal infections will worsen over time, so it's important to start treatment as the first signs develop.

Some cases can be very painful and cause permanent damage if left untreated. Nail professionals must offer the right homecare product or refer the client to a GP. The condition can be treated at home, however, be aware - some commonly recommended home remedies are ineffective, allowing the infection to progress, or can cause other issues.

There are safe, effective products available without a prescription. Look for products that contain clotrimazole, an ingredient commonly used to treat fungal infections. Footlogix has developed a complete line of anti-fungal products that contain clotrimazole, as well as other ingredients that promote healing, calm irritation and stabilise damaged skin barriers - killing the fungus and providing relief from the itching, peeling and irritation often associated with fungal infections. The Footlogix Dermal Infusion Technology® carries these ingredients past the *stratum corneum* into the layers of the epidermis, ensuring that active ingredients penetrate and reach the targeted areas.

For best results, apply treatment products to clean, dry feet and toenails. Spray product across the nail's free edge so it can penetrate under the free edge and across the top of the nail. When applying topical mousses, ensure the product gets in between the toes where fungus loves to hide. Footlogix anti-fungal products should be applied twice daily for the first two weeks and then once-a-day thereafter. 5

Footlogix products are available via www.louellabelle.co.uk
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The effect of diabetes on the feet

Diabetes affects many systems in the body, but the two that have the greatest impact on the feet are the circulatory and nervous systems. Poor circulation affects the skin on the feet and legs making it drier than usual and also more prone to infection; in the worst-case scenario, ulceration. Diabetics also frequently experience cold feet.

Diabetic neuropathy is becoming a well-known term among diabetics, pedicurists and the population at large. Diabetics frequently experience numbness, tingling and even a burning sensation in their feet and lower limbs. It's the loss of feeling and sensitivity to temperature that have the greatest implications.

Due to this loss in sensitivity and feeling, the health of the feet becomes even more important, because they're more vulnerable. A particular cause for concern surrounds the skin and how much weaker the skin becomes when it doesn't have the proper circulatory support. This is the foundation for many issues - the same issues that with the proper support, can be addressed with the right pedicure treatment.

Common foot conditions for diabetics

Some of the key warning signs often associated with diabetes and foot health involve some pretty noticeable symptoms - ones that can worsen over time, and might not even be recognisable at first glance. These include dry, scaly skin, changes in skin colour (purple or brown), a build up of dead skin around the nail folds, the feet are more prone to callus build up on pressure points, parchment paper-type skin and minor infections on the foot.

Given that diabetic feet are more susceptible to damage, due to the complex nature of circulatory issues, taking care of them becomes non-negotiable. Not only does it help with general wellbeing, but it acts as protection from other problematic skin issues.

Pedicures for diabetics can help to maintain healthy feet. Footlogix products are an important part of keeping diabetics feet happy and healthy.

Notes on...a diabetic pedicure

- **Client consultation** - If there is evidence of cuts, sores, ulcers or infections, clients should be referred to a medical practitioner.
- **Footlogix Foot Soak** - This pH balanced formula gently cleanses, hydrates, softens and prepares the skin. For diabetics, feet are typically soaked for no more than 3-5 minutes.
- **Footlogix Callus Softener** - Where calluses are present, spray liberally and allow the formula to soak in for 3-5 minutes. This softener should also be sprayed across the nails, to remove build up of dry, dead skin around the nail fold. It's important that extra care is exercised and the tech should be very gentle when cleaning under the toenails. Use the Footlogix Stainless Steel Pedicure File, to reduce calluses on the heels and balls of the feet. Lastly, spray the softener over the entire foot to remove any debris. This will give added moisture to the skin, as the callus softener doesn't need to be washed off and continues to be effective after the service.
- **Footlogix DD Cream Mousse with Dermal Infusion Technology®** - This super hydrating, yet lightweight mousse locks moisture into the skin. It contains effective anti-microbial agents that combat dry, unsightly, flaking and rough skin, making the DD Cream Mousse ideal for diabetics, as well as people with atopic dermatitis and sensitive skin. This formula has anti-ageing and cellular regenerative properties.
- **Footlogix Massage Formula** - the treatment is completed with a gentle foot and leg massage. Two to three pumps per foot and leg will allow enough slip for a 5-10 minute massage. Footlogix products are non-occlusive and do not seal off the natural functions of the skin. This is of high importance to diabetics.
- **Frequency** - this pedicure should be performed every four weeks.



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