

What is Hyperkeratosis?

Hyperkeratosis is one of the most common conditions a podiatrist treats. Hyperkeratosis is another name for corn or callus. They can show up anywhere on the feet and vary in seriousness from a small callus under the foot, to an infected ulcer that can appear under a corn on a toe.

Basically, the skin has hardened due to repeated friction and pressure. It is the body's way of protecting itself. Hyperkeratosis usually refers to a more scattered thickening of the skin (generally on the toes, but can show up on the metatarsal of the foot) whereas a corn is a thicker more centered area (more common on tops of the toes).

What Happens if Hyperkeratosis is Not Treated?

Hyperkeratosis that are not treated will be painful. They will not fix themselves, the pressure that formed them needs to be released. If not treated the skin will keep getting thicker and could develop into an abscess. Next it could get infected - the infection may spread. This may turn into a serious condition for patients with diabetes.

Trying to cut the corns or calluses yourself is dangerous, especially if you injure yourself. In the warm and damp environment of enclosed shoes, infection can easily turn into a serious wound. Always make an appointment with your podiatrist.

Treatment

Your podiatrist will ask you some questions about how long you have had the hyperkeratosis and where does it hurt. The podiatrist will probably examine your shoes for the proper fit. He or she may advise you to use orthotics to relieve some of the pressure. He or she will set up a regular schedule for the trimming and or cutting of the hyperkeratosis. You may require surgery.