

CORN or CALLUS



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

- A corn is a thickening (bump) of the outer skin layer, usually over bony areas such as toe joints. Corns affect toe joints and the skin between toes.
- A callus is a painless thickening of skin caused by repeated pressure or irritation. A callus can appear on any part of the body, especially hands, feet, or knees, that endures repeated pressure or irritation.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Corn: A small, tender and painful raised bump on the side or over the joint of a toe. Corns are usually 3 mm to 10 mm in diameter and have a hard center.
- Callus: A rough, thickened area of skin that appears after repeated pressure or irritation.

CAUSES

Corns and calluses form to protect a skin area from injury caused by repeated rubbing or squeezing. Pressure causes cells in the irritated area to grow at a faster rate, leading to overgrowth.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Shoes that fit poorly. Socks that bunch up.
- Persons with jobs that involve pressure on the hands or knees, such as carpenters, writers, guitar players, or tile layers.
- Foot deformity.
- Athletic activities that put stress on hands or feet.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Don't wear shoes or socks that fit poorly.
- Avoid activities that create constant pressure on specific skin areas.
- When possible, wear protective gear, such as gloves or knee-pads.
- Keep skin moisturized.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable if the problem that caused it can be removed. Allow 3 weeks for recovery. Corns and calluses are likely to recur, even with treatment, if the cause is not removed.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Back, hip, knee, or ankle pain caused by a change in the way you walk due to pain in your foot.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Self-care is often all that is needed.
- Remove the source of pressure, if possible. Get rid of shoes that do not fit well.
- Use corn and callus pads to reduce pressure on the irritated areas.
- Peel or rub the thickened area with a pumice stone to remove it. Don't cut it with a razor. Soak the area in warm water to soften it before peeling.
- See your health care provider or a foot care provider if self-care is not effective. Diagnosis is done by an exam of the affected area. Medical tests are usually not needed, but an x-ray may be done.
- Medical care may involve shaving or cutting off the hardened area of skin, removing the corn or callus with a medicine used on the skin, and (rarely) surgery. Surgery does not remove the cause, and scarring from surgery is painful and may complicate healing.

MEDICATIONS

- Peel the upper layers of the corn once or twice a day, and then apply a nonprescription 5% or 10% salicylic ointment. Cover with adhesive tape.
- A corn or callus may sometimes be injected with cortisone medicine to reduce swelling or pain.
- An antibiotic may be prescribed for skin infection.

ACTIVITY

Resume your normal activities as soon as symptoms improve.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has corns or calluses that do not heal, despite self-treatment.
- You develop signs of infection around a corn or callus. Signs of infection include redness, swelling, pain, heat, or tenderness.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page