

Does Medicare Pay for Toenail Care?

Medicare will cover the treatment of corns, calluses, and toenails once every **61 days** in persons having certain systemic conditions. Examples of such conditions include: Diabetes with peripheral arterial disease, peripheral arterial disease, peripheral neuropathy, and chronic phlebitis.

The health condition also must be of sufficient severity to require professional care. The presence of *uncomplicated* diabetes or peripheral vascular disease **may not qualify you for Medicare reimbursement for this care**. You must also be under the active care of a physician for some of the above mentioned conditions. Medicare defines this as having seen your medical doctor within the last six months. Medicare requires your podiatrist to separate the charges for cutting of corns and calluses from the cutting of nails.

Ingrown Toenails

When a toenail penetrates the skin it can become painful and infected. If the treatment requires a partial removal of the nail under a local injectable anesthetic, Medicare should cover the service. If the treatment only requires a trimming of the nail corner, it is considered routine foot care and will not be a covered service.

Painful Thickened Nails

A fungal infection or toenail deformity may present as thickening and discoloration of toenails. If the toenails become painful or limit ambulation, and require reduction of the thickness and length, then this service may be covered by Medicare. If your podiatrist determines that this treatment might be covered, Medicare has rules regarding the frequency of this type of care.

Other Foot Conditions

Medicare generally covers the medical and surgical treatment of other foot conditions such as foot injuries, inflammatory disorders, infections, ulcerations, warts, bone deformities and other painful or symptomatic conditions of the foot. If you have any questions concerning Medicare coverage please consult your podiatrist or contact Medicare at: 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227).

Non-Covered Foot Care

The cutting of toenails in a healthy person or when they are not painful is not a payable service by Medicare. The cutting of corns and calluses in a healthy person is not a payable service by Medicare. Legally, your podiatrist cannot try to obtain Medicare payment for non-covered foot care. If you choose to have this service performed then you are responsible for payment directly to the treating podiatrist.

Waiver

If covered foot care is performed more frequently than Medicare allows, Medicare requires that you sign a waiver stating that you are aware that you have exceeded your allowed covered visits. You will be advised of this prior to treatment. If you choose to have this service, you will be responsible for payment to your podiatrist for the foot care. If a claim is submitted for that non-covered service, your podiatrist is required to inform Medicare that non-covered services were performed.