

Foot Infections

MICHAEL E. DeBAKEY
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

Understanding Foot Infections

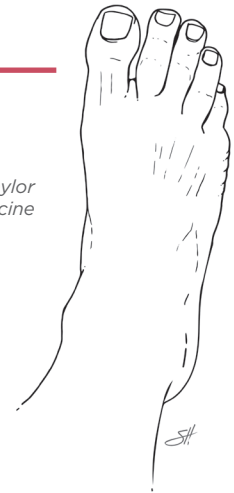
A foot infection happens when bacteria enter your foot and cause problems. Infections can be painful and need proper care, which sometimes includes surgery.

Signs and Symptoms

If you have a foot infection, you might notice:

- Redness, swelling or warmth in the infected area
- Pain or tenderness
- Pus or fluid coming out of the wound
- A bad smell from the infected spot
- Fever or chills if the infection is severe

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Causes of Foot Infections

Foot infections can happen for different reasons. Some common causes include:

- *Cuts or wounds*: If you get a cut on your foot and don't keep it clean, germs can enter the wound and cause an infection. This can also occur with a surgical wound like an amputation stump.
- *Ingrown toenails*: When a toenail grows into your skin instead of over it, it can create a painful infection.
- *Athlete's foot*: This is a fungal infection that can make the skin between your toes red, itchy and sore.
- *Diabetes*: People with diabetes are at higher risk for foot infections because diabetes can damage nerves and reduce blood flow to the feet. They can also develop foot ulcers which can sometimes get infected.

When is Surgery Necessary?

Most foot infections can be treated with antibiotics and proper wound care. However, there are situations where surgery might be needed:

- *Abscess*: If a pocket of pus forms in the infected area, a surgeon may need to drain it to remove the infection source.
- *Deep infections*: In some cases, infections can reach deep tissues, including bones. Surgery may be necessary to remove infected tissue or bone.
- *Non-healing wounds*: When wounds don't get better with antibiotics and regular care, surgery can help by removing damaged tissue to allow healing.
- *Ingrown toenails*: Severe cases of ingrown toenails may require a procedure to remove a portion of the nail or the tissue causing the problem.

Surgery is usually considered when other treatments aren't working, or the infection is spreading. Your doctor will decide the best approach to treat your specific infection.



Remember, it's important to reach out to a healthcare provider if you suspect a foot infection. Timely treatment can help prevent complications, and they can guide you on the best course of action. Taking good care of your feet, especially if you have diabetes, is essential to prevent foot infections in the first place.



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