

### What happens when the foot settles?

You may be provided with protective specialist footwear that helps your foot to work better. You will be asked to gradually wear in your shoes and check for signs of damage to your foot.

You will still be classed as high risk for developing foot complications and will need to have regular check ups with the foot protection team.

### Other sources of information

#### **PALS Patient Advice and Liaison Service**

We act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and where appropriate, relevant organisations to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. We can also help you get support from other local or national agencies.

**Royal Shrewsbury Hospital**, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

**Princess Royal Hospital**, Tel: 01952 282888

### Other Sources of Information

#### **NHS 111**

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile) Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

#### **Patient UK**

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self help groups and a directory of UK health websites. Website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

#### **Self Help & Support Groups**

A selection of websites providing access to good quality patient and consumer health information, covering specific age groups and conditions.

Also includes Shropshire Community Directory which contains up-to-date information on community groups, clubs, societies, organisations, support groups and self-help groups covering Shropshire and its borders.

Website:

[www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/](http://www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/)

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[www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)



**The Shrewsbury and  
Telford Hospital**  
NHS Trust

### Patient Information

#### **Charcot Foot**

#### **Diabetes foot clinic**

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital  
Tel: 01743 261000 ext 3055  
Email: [sath.dfc@nhs.net](mailto:sath.dfc@nhs.net)



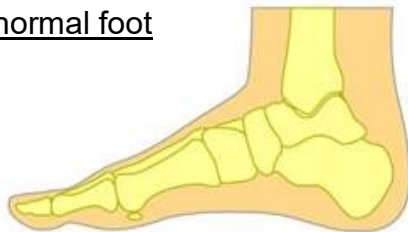
Diabetes is a lifelong condition which can cause foot complications. These problems can happen due to damaged nerves and blood vessels.

Nerve damage in your feet is called peripheral neuropathy and it can cause numbness in your feet. These changes may be gradual and you may not notice them.

### What is Charcot foot?

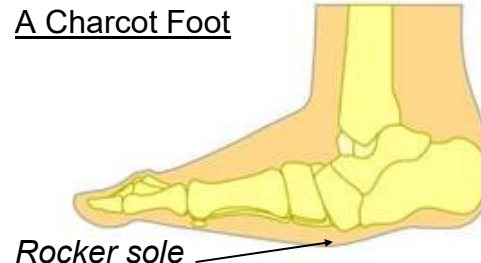
Charcot foot is a problem which affects your foot if you have neuropathy (nerve damage with numbness). Charcot foot can cause the bones to become fragile, the bones may break or dislocate in response to very minor forces, such as everyday tasks like standing or walking. If not treated quickly, the bones that make the arch of your foot, may collapse and you may start walking on these now lumpy bones instead of the normal bones of your foot.. This can make your foot deformed. In a normal foot we first walk on our heel, then toes to push our body

A normal foot



weight forward, but in a Charcot foot that has collapsed you may just walk on the arch area.

A Charcot Foot



### How will I know if I have a Charcot foot?

The early signs of Charcot foot is swelling, heat and redness in the affected area of the foot or ankle. These symptoms can be mistaken for infection or gout. Sometimes Charcot can follow a minor injury or recent foot surgery, but it can start for no obvious reason.

As a rule only one foot is affected at a time. In rare cases it can be present in both feet.

### How is Charcot diagnosed?

The diabetes foot team will examine your foot and carry out some painless tests such as temperature and neuropathy testing. You will be sent for an X-Ray of the affected foot as this will see if there are any changes to the bones. In the early stages of Charcot, changes in the foot structure may not show up on X-Ray. If this is the case, you may be asked to have a MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) Scan. The test will show areas of inflammation (swelling) within the bone, which is the earliest sign of the condition.

### What is the treatment for Charcot foot?

The aim for treatment is:

- To prevent the shape of the foot changing whilst the inflammation (swelling) settles.
- If the shape of your foot has changed, this is not reversible. In this case, the aim of the treatment would be to prevent further damage.

### The most important treatment is rest.

Immobilising (taking weight off the foot) is the best way to help inflammation settle and prevent deformity. This is normally done with a type of cast or a special boot (the same way if you have a broken bone). This allows you to do minimal weight bearing and prevents putting too much pressure on your foot.

**It is really important that you follow the treatment plan for your Charcot foot, which might mean making changes to your lifestyle. If you do not follow the treatment plan, it can cause serious, long-term damage to your foot.**

### How long does treatment take?

The length of treatment is different for everyone and depends upon your healing rate, diabetes control and using the cast, or boot, to protect the foot. The average length of time in a cast in the UK is ten months.

### Does it get better?

Yes, but it can take a long time. No one knows what causes the Charcot foot but it eventually settles and the bones will return to their original strength. It can be difficult to tell when the foot is better. A good way to know is to compare the temperature of the feet.