

# **CORNS & CALLUSES**

Corns and calluses both present as painful lumps that can make you feel like you're constantly walking on pebbles – no matter what shoes you're wearing or how soft the surface you're walking on. Despite having both a similar appearance and the same cause, corns and calluses are different problems – and knowing which one you have can be the difference between getting that much-needed relief or continuing to put up with the pain.

## WHAT CAUSES CORNS AND CALLUSES TO APPEAR?

**The simple answer: pressure and friction.** Corns and calluses both develop as a natural response to friction and pressure to the skin. It's actually a protective mechanism by which your body tries to limit further damage – imagine that you're getting constant rubbing against fragile skin. While this is ongoing, it may lead to a break in the skin – leaving your feet vulnerable to infection and other problems.

Instead, your body responds by thickening the skin in this area to withstand the pressure and friction. As a result, a thicker layer of dead skin forms – this is the foundation of both callus and corns, though corns are significantly more localised whereas callus can be widespread across the surface of the foot. Initially, the thickened skin will purely have a beneficial and protective function. Unfortunately, as it continues to build, it can start to become uncomfortable and ultimately painful to walk on.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CORN AND CALLUS?

Both corns and calluses look like thickened yellow-ish lumps on the bottoms of the feet – most often at the ball of the feet, the heels and the toes, though they can appear anywhere. The main difference is that a callus forms on the outside of the skin, whether it be localised to a small stone-like area or the entire heel, whereas corns develop at pin-points of significant pressure which forms a hard cone-like area of hard, dead skin that protrudes into the skin. In most cases, corns are covered by some callus too, meaning that the overlying callus must be taken care of first and then the corn must be treated.



### THE TYPES OF CORNS

While there is only one type of callus, there are multiple types of corns, though the most common is the hard corn which is what most people are referring to when they have a corn.

- ✓ Hard corn this has a firm core, usually found over the toe joints, the sides of the toes or under the heel or ball of the foot
- ✓ Soft corn found between the toes, often appear white and rubbery due to the skin being damp from absorbing moisture
- ✓ Seed corn very small corns which often occur in clusters on the soles of the feet in people with dry skin
- ✓ Neurovascular corn a hard corn involving blood vessels & nerves. They are often very painful and can be difficult to treat

### **TREATING CORNS AND CALLUSES**

Both corns and calluses can be removed safely, effectively and without any pain in one appointment by our podiatry team. Calluses are reduced in size to leave a comfortable layer of skin, immediately relieving any discomfort. It's important to still leave a small (and often unnoticeable) layer as your skin developed this for a reason.

Corns have any overlying callus reduced and are then 'scooped out', again painlessly, instantly removing the feeling of walking on a pebble and giving you a noticeable difference when your feet touch the ground. The reason that both of these processes are painless is that we are working with dead skin that has no feeling.

