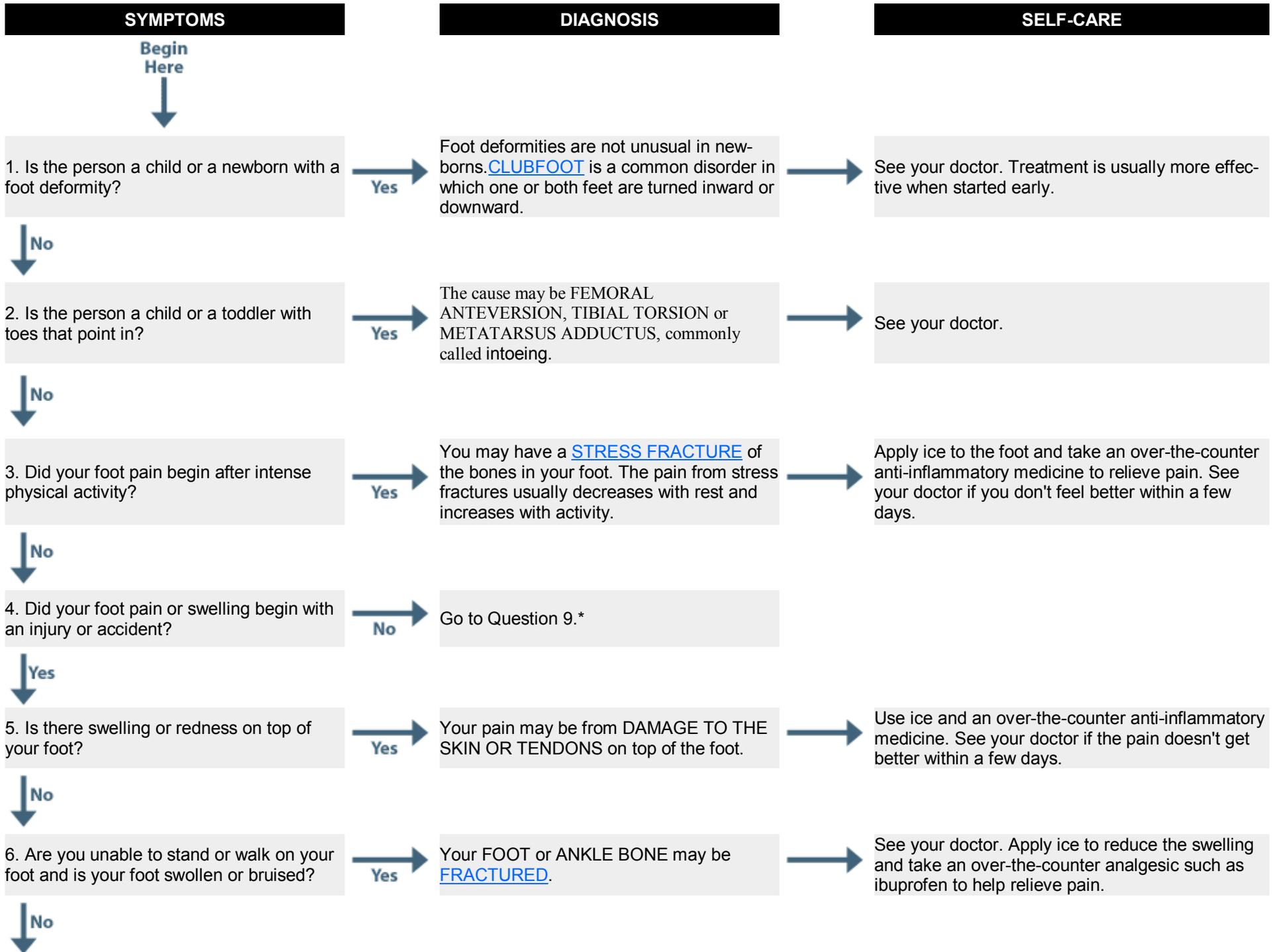


Foot Problems

From warts to bunions, feet can suffer from some painful conditions. Use this chart to find appropriate self-care options.



7. Is the pain on the bottom of your foot between the ball and the heel?

Yes →

You may have **SPRAINED** the **LIGAMENT** in the arch of the foot.

→

Use shoes with an arch support and take an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medicine. See your doctor if the pain is severe or if you can't walk on the foot.

↓ No

8. Is the pain only in one toe and did it start after you hit, twisted or jammed the toe?

Yes →

Your pain may be from **TURF TOE** (a sprained big toe), from a **PULLED LIGAMENT** or from a **FRACTURE**.

→

See your doctor. Applying ice or taping the sore toe to the next toe can help relieve the pain.

↓ No

*9. Does your foot look flat and are you experiencing foot pain and pain on the inside of your ankle, along with swelling?

Yes →

You may have **FALLEN ARCHES**, a condition known as **FLAT FEET**.

→

Wear shoes that have solid support and avoid weight-bearing activities until the pain and swelling go away. See your doctor if your symptoms persist.

↓ No

10. Does your foot hurt somewhere between the heel and the ball of the foot, especially when you take your first steps after getting up the morning?

Yes →

Your pain may be from irritation of the arch ligament and tissues, called **PLANTAR FASCIITIS**.

→

Try to keep weight off your foot until the inflammation is better. Use an anti-inflammatory medicine to relieve the pain. Rest and apply ice to the sore area. See your doctor if your pain doesn't get better.

↓ No

11. Do you have a small, hard, thickened area of skin on the bottom of the foot or on the sides of the toe?

Yes →

These thickened areas are likely to be **CORNS**. If they appear to have small granules in them, they may be **WARTS**. A small piece of retained glass can also cause these problems.

→

Use an over-the-counter corn or wart remover. Remove the dead skin after each treatment. See your doctor if you have diabetes, if the corns or warts are painful or inflamed, or if they're large, very numerous or resistant to over-the-counter medicines.

↓ No

12. Do you have pain in your big toe or in the big toe joint, and does your big toe seem to be deformed, pointing toward the small toes?

Yes →

Your toe deformity may be from a collapsing joint, commonly called a **BUNION**.

→

Wear comfortable shoes that provide plenty of room for your toes. Avoid high-heeled shoes and apply ice, or try over-the-counter medicines such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen to relieve the pain. See your doctor if your condition worsens.

↓ No

13. Do you have a fever and are your joints tender, sore, red or swollen?

Yes

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS may be the cause of the pain.

See your doctor. Treatment for rheumatoid arthritis may include medications, physical therapy, exercise and, in some cases, surgery.

No

14. Do you have a red, swollen big toe that hurts when anything touches it?

Yes

You may have GOUT.

See your doctor.

No

15. Do you have intense pain near your heel when you put weight on it?

Yes

Your pain may be from a HEEL SPUR, a small bulge from the heel bone, but more likely to be due to PLANTAR FASCIITIS.

See your doctor. He or she can suggest special stretching exercises to help relieve the pain. A soft insole or a firm insole with a hole under the spur may also help.

No

16. Do you have a moist, white area of peeling skin and itching between your toes, and/or scaling and itching skin on your foot?

Yes

These may be symptoms of a fungal infection called ATHLETE'S FOOT.

Use an over-the-counter athlete's foot spray or cream. Wash your feet thoroughly with soap and water twice a day. Be sure to dry your feet completely. If your symptoms aren't better in 1 to 2 weeks, see your doctor. If the affected area is very red and tender, see your doctor sooner.

No

17. Do you have a burning pain at the base of a toe on the bottom of your foot, along with tingling or numbness in your toes?

Yes

You may have MORTON'S NEUROMA, a noncancerous growth of nerve tissue.

Wear wide shoes with soft insoles. Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication or ice massages may help relieve the pain.

No

18. Is a part of your foot red, swollen, warm and tender?

Yes

You may have an infection called CELLULITIS. If you have diabetes, an infection of your foot may be more common and more dangerous.

URGENT
See your doctor promptly. Cellulitis is usually treated with antibiotics.

No

19. Have your toes been exposed to very cold temperatures?

Yes

FROSTBITE may damage your skin and tissues.

→

URGENT
See your doctor. Warm the feet by immersing them in warm (not hot) water or by applying warm

No

20. Have you lost sensation in your toes or are they discolored and foul-smelling?

Yes

GANGRENE can occur if a body part loses its blood supply because of diabetes or hardening of the arteries.

→

URGENT
See your doctor. Good diabetic foot care may prevent some infections that could lead to gangrene

No

For more information, please talk to your doctor. If you think the problem is serious, call your doctor right away.

This tool has been reviewed by doctors and is for general educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice. The information in this tool should not be relied upon to make decisions about your health. Always consult your family doctor with questions about your individual condition(s) and/or circumstances. Source: American Academy of Family Physicians. Family Health & Medical Guide. Dallas: Word Publishing; 1996.