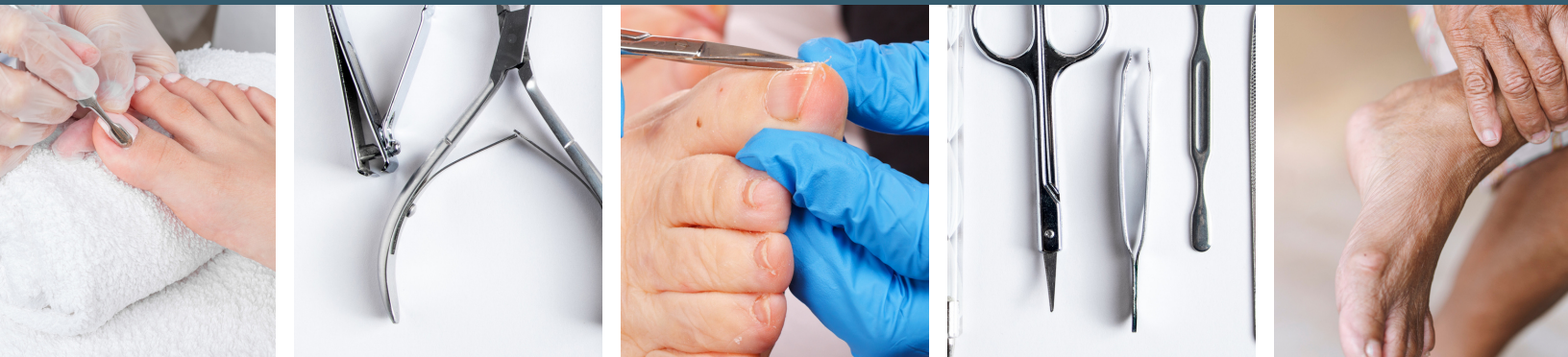


# Nail and Foot Care for Residents in Congregate-Living Settings



## What is foot care?

**Foot care is about the overall health of the feet, including diagnosis and treatment of various foot problems such as ingrown toenails or fungal infection, as well as preventative care for those with a higher risk of foot health issues.**

Health care providers performing any aspect of foot care are required to properly handle equipment to minimize the risk of injury and infection. Health care facilities (such as a Long-Term Care Homes) and foot care health care providers (such as Foot Care Nurses) are required to follow specific infection prevention and control (IPAC) standards when it comes to providing foot care. Improperly handled foot care equipment or practices can cause infection due to exposure to blood or body fluids.

Cutting and caring for nails in the community (such as at a retail shop offering nail care), while not considered 'foot care,' must also follow IPAC standards but they are slightly different than in health care. The intention of a pedicure in this setting is to improve the appearance of the feet and toenails rather than to provide a health care service.

Residents living in congregate living settings may own their own equipment and perform their own nail care—with the intent of a home pedicure or manicure.

## How do I know that the IPAC standards are being met?

If your facility brings in **third-party providers** such as foot care nurses, you should look for the following:

- The provider has written policies for cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of their equipment.
- The provider always performs hand hygiene before starting the service and wears gloves. If they are providing service to more than one resident at a visit, they wash their hands and change their gloves between residents.
- Equipment arrives packaged and is opened just before starting the service.
- A new set of sterile equipment is used for each resident.
- Equipment such as emery boards is single-use only—a new, fresh one must be used each time for each resident and discarded after use.

Continued.

# Nail and Foot Care for Residents in Congregate-Living Settings (pg 2/3)

- Foot baths or basins are lined with a plastic liner that is discarded after each use. The basin is cleaned and disinfected after each use as per manufacturer's instructions.
- Items such as creams and lotions are either single client use or are dispensed using an applicator which is not 'double-dipped' back into the product.
- Any sharps, such as foot blades, are single-use, sterile and disposed of in a sharps container after use.

Please see [Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Medical Equipment/Devices In All Health Care Settings, 3rd edition](#) for more information on the IPAC requirements of foot care in a health care context.

---

## For community retail nail stores:

- You should see the same items as above. Foot baths may be plumbed in and therefore may not be lined—rather they are required to be properly cleaned and disinfected between each client.
  - Call your local public health unit or check their website to ensure that the facility is regularly inspected. You can also look for a sign at the facility that indicates that the local public health unit inspects the premises.
  - Please see [Guide to Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Service Settings, 3rd edition](#) for more information on the IPAC requirements of retail nail stores.
- 

## For health care settings such as Long-Term Care Homes that provide footcare to residents:

- You must have written policies and procedures for foot care. These documents must be based on [Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Medical Equipment/Devices In All Health Care Settings, 3rd edition](#) and all equipment must be sterile—either sterile, single-use equipment that is only opened at the time of providing service - or multi-use equipment that is cleaned and sterilized (at your facility or by a contracted service) between each use.
- You must have the proper equipment and training to perform sterilization, if you are performing your own reprocessing. Steam sterilization is preferred and this requires a properly functioning and regularly tested autoclave.
- Alternatively, your facility may contract the reprocessing of foot care equipment to a contractor. Contracted services must follow best practices for reprocessing devices and storage. The information in this document is not enough to guide you in re-processing equipment for footcare. Please contact your local public health unit or IPAC Hub for further information and guidance.
- Residents in health care facilities such as LTCHs may have their own personal equipment for home manicures and pedicures. Noncritical instruments such as nail clippers owned by the resident can be cleaned and dried between uses, as long as it is used by that resident for non-invasive procedures and non-diseased nails. LTCHs should refer to [Infection Prevention and Control for Long-Term Care Homes Summary of Key Principles and Best Practices](#).

# Nail and Foot Care for Residents in Congregate-Living Settings (pg 3/3)

## **We are not considered a health care facility. Can we assist our residents with cutting and caring for their nails?**

Yes, after you ensure that the resident does not have special needs (diabetes, infection, etc.) that would require them to have their footcare done by a health care professional. Once you have established that you must follow these guidelines when assisting residents with a home manicure or pedicure:

- Equipment such as nail clippers must never be shared among residents. Each resident should have their own equipment and it should be labelled with their name. If there is a reason that a resident's nail clippers and other equipment cannot be kept with their belongings in their own personal space, congregate living settings must ensure that the equipment is properly labelled with the resident's first and last name and stored completely separately from other resident's equipment (e.g., each in their own clean, re-usable container). Do not store this equipment in a communal area such as a bathroom.
- Staff providing this service must follow basic infection prevention and control practices. Complete hand hygiene and wear disposable gloves prior to cutting or filing the nails. Ensure you are working in a clean, well-lit area. Use a disposable cloth to place the foot on and collect any clippings. Dispose of the cloth at the end of the service. Remove disposable gloves and perform hand hygiene.
- Clippers and other nail equipment dedicated to/belonging to one resident should be cleaned between uses (with soap and water) and dried (to avoid damage to the equipment). Store them in a way that keeps them clean and dry between uses.
- Do not use any equipment that comes with a high-risk of cutting the resident such as a pedi-blade or a metal 'cheese-grater' type file (generally used to cut or smooth rough or calloused skin).
- Any creams or lotions must be dedicated to that resident and labelled with their name

## **References:**

- Public Health Ontario: Infection Prevention and Control for Long-Term Care Homes Summary of Key Principles and Best Practices
- IPAC Canada: Practice Recommendations for Infection Prevention and Control Related to Foot Care in Healthcare Settings



For more information, please contact your local IPAC Hub at  
[IPACHUB@SWPUBLICHEALTH.CA](mailto:IPACHUB@SWPUBLICHEALTH.CA)