

blog post for physiotherapist

What are Covid Toes?

Covid toes are a potential symptom of the coronavirus where patients experience a rash, similar to frostbite or chilblains, on their toes or feet.

It is believed that Covid toes could be a less common symptom of the coronavirus, as a fraction of confirmed cases around the world have experienced these unique symptoms.

What Research has been Completed on Covid Toes?

The coronavirus is a novel virus that is not entirely understood yet. The long term repercussions of having the coronavirus are unknown and patients around the world have reported unusual symptoms - one of them being Covid toes.

In an Italian research paper, dermatologists reported that one in five patients had experienced a skin symptom during their diagnosis. Their study evaluated 88 Covid-19 patients and the skin symptoms were mainly rashes located on the trunk.

Meanwhile, a team of Spanish doctors determined that at least 375 confirmed coronavirus patients were also experiencing a skin condition. These included hives and lesions on the body and symptoms of the toes and feet.

To date, most of the coronavirus patients reporting Covid toes have recovered well from the virus and had mild symptoms otherwise. The data also suggests that the most commonly affected age group experiencing Covid toes are 20-30 year old adults.

What do Covid Toes Look Like?

Covid toes look like frostbite or chilblains. They present as a pink or red rash on the patient's feet, often accompanied by an itching or burning sensation. Swelling may be present and the affected area may turn purple over time.

What Causes Covid Patients to Develop Covid Toes?

There are various theories as to the cause of Covid toes. Further research is required to determine its true cause and decipher why only some confirmed patients experience the peculiar symptom.

The most likely cause of Covid toes is that it results from the body's inflammatory response.

Northwestern University's Department of Dermatology chair, Dr. Amy Paller concludes that we do not yet know the cause of Covid toes, "It's a real phenomenon," she said, "we don't really understand it at all."

Can you Treat Covid Toes? If so, how?

Covid toes typically fade and heal as the coronavirus patient recovers. In serious cases where lesions have become infected, patients may require medical attention for their wound.

Dr Lindy Fox, a dermatologist from San Francisco spoke to the New York Times about Covid Toes, saying that "Usually it's a good sign your body has seen Covid and is making a good immune reaction to it."

Dr Fox also stated that while she only used to treat up to five patients a year for chilblains and similar red or purple foot lesions, she has seen dozens in the past few weeks.

I have a Rash on my Feet. Do I have the Coronavirus?

The existence of a foot rash does not necessarily indicate if you have the coronavirus. Foot and toe rashes have a variety of causes.

Covid toes are not a common symptom of the coronavirus. The most common symptoms of the coronavirus include shortness of breath, a dry cough, fever and fatigue.

If you suspect you have the coronavirus, contact the 24 hour Covid hotline at 1800 675 398 and get tested.

If you have a foot rash or other injury concern, contact Northern Districts Physiotherapy and Sports Clinic and book in a telehealth consultation. Book online now.