Charcot Foot

Charcot foot can happen in people who have nerve damage, also called peripheral neuropathy. It is when the foot bones break down and shift out of place. This can cause a bad foot shape that can lead to ulcers and even amputation. We do not know the true cause of this joint change.

Symptoms
People with Charcot foot may notice symptoms in their feet such as:

- Increased warmth
- Redness
- Swelling
- Instability
- Pain

If you have nerve damage and think you may have Charcot foot, call a foot doctor right away. They can order an x ray or MRI to check.

Treatment
You may be prescribed a cast or a boot and must keep all weight off the foot for a long time. If the foot shape is still not stable or a wound develops, you may need surgery to fix the shape.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8498.