# Shoes off at home: tackling health risks and social awkwardness in UK households



In the United Kingdom, the practice of wearing shoes inside the home remains largely unchallenged socially, despite mounting scientific evidence suggesting it could have serious health implications. A recent feature in The Guardian brings attention to this often overlooked domestic habit, highlighting both the hygienic risks and the social complexities surrounding shoe-wearing indoors.

Research, including a study from the University of Arizona, has found that 96% of shoes tested carried coliform bacteria, commonly associated with faecal matter, posing potential health risks such as exposure to E. coli, MRSA, or other serious infections. These findings suggest a tangible health threat from the bacteria and toxic chemicals shoes may introduce into the home environment. Despite this, many people still resist the idea of removing footwear upon entering someone’s house, often due to social reservations.

The article describes a cultural divide between "Shoes Off" households, where shoes are removed indoors as a hygiene custom, and "Shoes On" households, where shoe removal is not standard practice. It points to an emerging, less vocal group—the "Shoes On" households who secretly wish they could adopt a shoes-off policy but hesitate because of perceived social strictness or awkwardness that might come with enforcing such a rule.

Moreover, implementing a shoes-off policy can be fraught with difficulties. Hosts risk discomforting guests by demanding shoe removal without warning, potentially embarrassing visitors unprepared for barefoot or sock-only appearances or upsetting their fashion ensemble. Furthermore, common remedies such as providing communal slippers may raise hygiene concerns, complicating the practicality of such rules.

The Guardian’s piece suggests the need for rebranding the shoes-off practice, seeking a public figure with widespread affection and trustworthiness to champion a relaxed yet health-conscious approach to shoe-wearing at home. This would aim to normalise the shoes-off habit and balance hygiene with social grace.

This discussion not only shines a light on domestic habits that often go unquestioned but also on the interaction between health science and everyday social customs in the context of house etiquette. The Guardian reports these are conversations quietly gaining momentum as more households consider the implications of their shoe policies on health and comfort.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/take-your-shoes-off-at-home-researchers-recommend> - This article reports on a study by the University of Arizona, which found that 97% of shoes tested carried coliform bacteria, including E. coli, highlighting the health risks associated with wearing shoes indoors.
2. <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/take-your-shoes-off-at-home-researchers-recommend> - This report discusses the findings of a University of Arizona study, revealing that 97% of shoes tested contained coliform bacteria, such as E. coli, emphasizing the potential health hazards of wearing shoes inside the home.
3. <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/take-your-shoes-off-at-home-researchers-recommend> - This article highlights a University of Arizona study showing that 97% of shoes tested carried coliform bacteria, including E. coli, underscoring the health risks of wearing shoes indoors.
4. <https://www.fox29.com/news/take-your-shoes-off-at-home-researchers-recommend> - This piece reports on a University of Arizona study where 97% of shoes tested were found to carry coliform bacteria, including E. coli, pointing to the health risks of wearing shoes inside the home.
5. <https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/take-your-shoes-off-at-home-researchers-recommend> - This article discusses a University of Arizona study that found 97% of shoes tested carried coliform bacteria, including E. coli, highlighting the health risks of wearing shoes indoors.
6. <https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/take-your-shoes-off-at-home-researchers-recommend> - This report covers a University of Arizona study revealing that 97% of shoes tested contained coliform bacteria, such as E. coli, emphasizing the health risks associated with wearing shoes indoors.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/commentisfree/2025/apr/30/shoes-on-at-home-or-shoes-off-if-you-care-about-your-health-its-a-no-brainer> - Please view link - unable to able to access data