

Foot Care and Diabetes

Not all people with diabetes have problems with their feet, but having diabetes may put you more at risk of developing foot problems such as

- **loss of feeling (which means you may not know you have hurt your feet). This is known as peripheral neuropathy**
- **poor blood supply**
- **slower healing**

To avoid these problems good control of your blood sugars, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels is important. Furthermore, if you smoke, you are strongly advised to stop.

A suitably trained health professional should assess your feet every year to assess your risk of developing foot problems and the need for more frequent review by a podiatrist.

Treat your feet with respect. If your skin breaks, even a tiny cut or blister, see your podiatrist, diabetes nurse or doctor.

Some dos

- Check your feet and shoes daily. If you can't reach them use a mirror or ask someone else to look.
- Keep your feet clean and dry gently between the toes.
- Moisturise your skin with hand cream or aqueous cream- but not between the toes.
- Wear shoes or slippers at all times. Wear the right shoes for the job.
- Cut your nails (softer after washing) according to the shape of your toe. If you can't cut your nails see a state-registered chiropodist (podiatrist) regularly.
- Choose shoes, which provide good support. They must be broad, long and deep enough, so have them measured for length and width. Check that you can wiggle all your toes in your shoes.
- Wear new shoes for short periods of time to begin with.
- Check your shoes for ridges, sharp points or sticking out nails. Tip shoes upside down before putting on.
- Loose fitting cotton socks or stockings are best. Choose ones without ridges or seams. If they do have these wear them inside out. Change them daily

Some don'ts

- Do not treat corns or calluses yourself.
- Never use surgical blades or corn paring knives or corn remedies on your feet. Go to a podiatrist.
- Avoid extremes of temperature - heat or cold.
- Avoid very hot baths. Put cold water in first then add hot water and test with your elbow.
- Avoid sitting close to fires or radiators
- Avoid hot water bottles and electric blankets. Wear warm loose bed socks instead.
- Do not walk barefoot if you have lost sensation in your feet.
- When in the sun always use high factor sunscreen on your feet and always wear suitable footwear to protect them.
- Do not dig down the sides of your nails.
- Do not smoke.
- Avoid excessive alcohol intake.

Badly fitting shoes can cause problems for the feet such as blisters, corns, hard skin, bunions and hammer toe.

Report any sign of infection, throbbing, discolouration or discharge to your podiatrist or to your general practitioner.