

Foot Care Tips

Foot and Nail Care

Good personal care can prevent problems caused by different medical conditions. Daily attention and regular exams are important.

Know Your Risks

You are at high risk for sores or ulcers on your feet if you have one or more of the following:

- loss of protective feeling
- weak or no pulses in your feet
- severe foot deformity
- history of foot sores
- previous amputation
- diabetes
- vascular insufficiency.

Make sure your health care provider looks at your feet at least once a year, or more often if there is a problem.

They may talk with you about special shoes and talk with you about caring for your feet. Your health care provider may refer you to a specialist if you have special needs.

Foot Care Tips

You can lower your chances of getting foot problems by doing the following.

- Look at your bare feet every day for cuts, blisters, cracks or sores. Use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet (if needed).
- Wash your feet with slightly warm water every day. Do not soak your feet because this will dry them out and might cause problems like cracking.

- Take showers instead of baths.
- Bathe with warm, not hot water.
- Use mild soaps and avoid use of bubble bath.
- Dry your feet well. Be sure to dry between your toes.
- Do not have pedicures if you have diabetes.

Keep your skin soft and smooth.

- Rub a thin coat of moisturizer over your feet. Use unscented moisturizers. A few recommendations are products like AmLactin[®], Eucerin[®], Keri[®], LacHydrin[®] and Lubriderm[®]. Do **not** rub lotion between your toes.
- If you have moisture between your toes, consider using talcum powder to reduce the moisture.
- See a podiatrist (foot care specialist) for problems with corns, calluses or cracked heels.

Trim your toenails each week or when needed.

- Trim your toenails straight across and file the edges with an emery board or nail file.
- Nails are easier to trim after a bath or shower.

Wear shoes and socks at all times.

- Never walk barefoot.
- Wear comfortable shoes and socks that fit well and protect your feet. Shoes that don't fit right can lead to blisters and sores.

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- Avoid shoes that have pointed toes or high heels. Break in new shoes slowly.
- Ask your health care provider if you need special shoes.
- Feel inside your shoes before putting them on each time to make sure the lining is smooth and free of objects.

Protect your feet from hot and cold.

- Wear shoes at the beach or on hot pavement.
- Do **not** use a heating pad or hot water bottle on your feet.
- Wear socks at night if your feet get cold.

Keep the blood flowing to your feet.

- Put your feet up when sitting.
- Wiggle your toes and move your ankles up and down for several minutes, 2 or 3 times each day.
- Do not cross your legs for a long time.
- Do not smoke. Smoking decreases the blood flow to your feet.

Check with your health care provider.

- Call your health care provider right away if a cut, sore, blister or bruise does not start to heal after one day.

Get started now.

- Begin to take good care of your feet today.
- Set a time every day to check your feet.
- Stick with your foot care program.
- Treat yourself to a new pair of soft cotton socks or a pair of canvas or leather shoes.
- Talk with your health care provider about any questions or concerns you may have.

Routine Nail Care with a Nurse

Ask your health care provider or podiatrist to place a referral for nail care if you have:

- diabetes
- vascular disease
- Buerger’s disease (thromboangitis)
- thrombophlebitis
- peripheral neuropathy
- arteriosclerosis
- long-term anticoagulation therapy.

Community Nail Care Services

Call your insurance provider before you make an appointment. Some foot and nail care providers do not accept insurance. Ask what your insurance covers, how often, and how much you need to pay at each visit.

Allina Health does not offer services for routine toenail trimming or cutting. Community services are available. To find a resource:

- Call the Senior Linkage Line at 1-800-333-2433. Ask for nail care services in your area.
- Call senior centers and ask if they have resources.
- Go to afcna.org (American Foot Care Nurses Association). Click the *Find a Foot Care Provider* link. Scroll to the section that asks you to choose your state. Enter “is” or “begins with” and then type the state you want.
- Use your internet browser to search for “foot and nail care providers.”

Be sure to ask which foot and nail care providers accept insurance and which are private pay.