

# Foot Care Tips for People Who Have Diabetes

## Foot Care

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

You need to take extra care of your feet and legs. Diabetes can cause damage to the nerves and blood vessels in your feet and lower legs. When nerves are damaged, you don't feel problems like sores or cuts on your feet.

Amputations caused by diabetes could be reduced by as much as 75 percent with good self-care and regular foot exams by your health care provider.

There are steps you can take to help avoid nerve and blood vessel damage:

- Keep your blood glucose as close to normal as possible.
- Have your health care provider check your feet.
- Take action to keep problems from getting worse by calling your health care provider at the first sign of a problem. Practice a foot care routine every day.

## Know Your Risks

You are at high risk for foot problems 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.

Make sure your health care provider looks at your feet at least once a year, or more often if there is a problem. He or she 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.
- Dry your feet well. Be sure to dry between your toes.

## Keep your skin soft and smooth.

- Rub a thin coat of skin lotion or cream over the tops and bottoms of your feet. Do not rub lotion between your toes.
- 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 when they are more flexible.

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### **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. 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.
- Don't use heating pads or hot water bottles 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, two or three times a day.
- Don't cross your legs for a long time.
- Don't 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.
- Follow your health care provider's advice about foot care.

### **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.

**This information is adapted from the  
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