



foot care

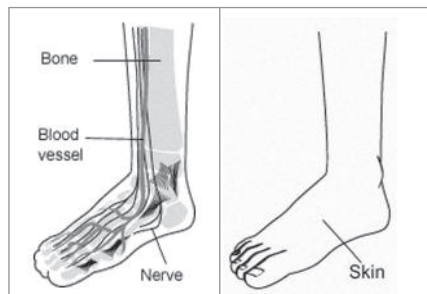
A Step in the Right Direction: Tips for Diabetes Foot Care

Why is foot care so important with diabetes?

Unfortunately, diabetes that is not well controlled can lead to serious problems in your feet and legs. High blood glucose levels over time can cause damage to the nerve endings leading to a loss of sensation. It can also lead to damage in the blood vessels which

can lead to poor circulation in your legs. This means if you have a cut, blister or sore on your foot

you may not feel it and this can lead to major problems if left untreated. High blood glucose and poor circulation can cause wounds to heal more slowly and put you at a higher risk for an infection.



What can I do to protect my feet?

- Work to keep your blood glucose in good control.
- Don't smoke.
- Keep your feet clean; wash them every day.
- Check your feet every single day for any changes. Inspect the skin for cuts, sores, blisters, red areas, drainage or any other unusual signs. Report any changes to your health care provider right away. If you have trouble checking, ask a friend or family member to help or try using a hand mirror to look at the bottom of your feet.
- Wear shoes that fit well. When you take off your shoes, check for any red areas that might mean your shoes don't fit well. Try buying new shoes at the end of the day when your feet are larger. Wear socks to avoid friction on bare feet from your shoes.
- Don't go barefoot, especially outdoors. Always wear shoes, slippers or water shoes at the pool or beach.
- Check with your health care provider about any activities you should avoid.
- Keep your nails trimmed but not too short. Cut nails to the shape of your toes and file sharp edges gently with an emery board.
- If you are unable to cut your own toe nails or you have corns and calluses or ingrown nails see a foot doctor (podiatrist) for your foot care. Avoid at-home remedies for corns, calluses and ingrown nails. Let your health care provider know right away of any problems. Infection can set in quickly if trouble areas are not tended to in a timely manner.
- Check the temperature of the bath water with your forearm before you step in to avoid burns. Don't use hot water bottles, heating pads or hot bath water on your feet.
- Check the inside of your shoes for any small objects before putting them on. It's easy for small pebbles or debris to cause irritations to your foot that can lead to ulcers and infections.
- Dry your feet well after bathing, especially between your toes. Moisture between the toes can lead to fungal infections.

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- Moisturize your feet daily but avoid moisturizer between your toes. Ask your health care provider what type of moisturizer is right for you.
- Have a thorough foot examination done by your health care provider at least once each year but be sure that they look at your feet at every visit. Be sure your feet are checked for sensation as well as having the circulation to your feet and legs checked.

Signs of poor circulation to your legs can include:

- pain in the legs when walking
- ulcers that don't heal or take a long time to heal
- feet that feel cold to touch

- loss or lack of hair on your legs

There are special shoes available for people with diabetes who have problems with their feet. Today these shoes come in more styles and colors and may even be reimbursed by your insurance company or Medicare.



When it comes to your feet, the old adage truly applies.



"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"

- Benjamin Franklin

Notes



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