

Caring For Your Feet

Living Well with Your Health Conditions

Foot care is an important part of diabetes management. People with diabetes are at increased risk for foot problems. High blood glucose can damage the nerves and blood vessels in your feet.

Symptoms of nerve damage can include:

- loss of feeling
- numbness
- burning or pain in feet or legs
- tingling
- trouble with balance

Symptoms of blood vessel (circulation) problems can include:

- cold feet
- leg and calf pain when walking, at night or at rest
- changes in skin color
- sores that don't heal
- dry cracked skin



You can prevent serious foot problems by taking care of your feet.

Do...

- DO check your feet everyday for cuts, cracks, bruises, blisters, sores, infections or unusual markings. Use a mirror if you need to, to look at the bottom of your feet.
- DO see your doctor or go to emergency that day if you have signs of infection such as pain, redness, swelling, or oozing pus.
- DO see your doctor within a few days at the first sign of any other problems.
- DO wash your feet with soap and water every day, especially between the toes, and dry them well.
- DO put cream or lotion on your heels and soles every day, but NEVER between your toes.
- DO change your socks every day and wear a good supportive shoe.
- DO trim your nails straight across.

- DO see a foot care specialist if you need advice or treatment including professional orthotics.
- DO clean a cut or scratch with a mild soap and water and cover with a dry dressing for sensitive skin.
- DO buy shoes in the late afternoon (since your feet swell slightly by then) and choose heels under 5 cm (2 inches).
- DO take care to keep your feet warm - avoid extreme cold and heat, and keep your feet out of direct sunlight.
- DO follow your physical activity plan, as this will improve the blood flow to your feet and legs, in addition to other benefits.
- DO maintain your blood glucose within target levels.

DON'T...

- DON'T smoke.
- DON'T cut your own corns or calluses or use over the counter medications to treat corns or warts. They are dangerous products for people with diabetes.
- DON'T treat your own in-grown toenails with a razor or scissors.
- DON'T apply heat to your feet with a hot water bottle or electric blanket. These products can burn your feet without you realizing it.
- DON'T put cream or lotion between your toes.
- DON'T take very hot baths or soak your feet in hot water.
- DON'T walk barefoot inside or outside.
- DON'T wear tight socks, garters or elastics or knee highs.
- DON'T wear shoes that feel tight. You should be able to wiggle your toes without much effort in proper fitting shoes.
- DON'T wear high heels that squish your toes.
- DON'T sit for long periods. Get up and walk around at least once every hour during the day.



Remember: The best thing you can do for your feet is to inspect them every day and see your doctor within 2 days if you notice anything of concern.