

Tips for keeping feet healthy

Foot for L. I. F. E.

Lifestyle Choices

Inspect your feet and footwear

Find professional help

Expect your feet to last a lifetime

Lifestyle Choices

- Eat a healthy diet. Protein helps with healing.
- Keep blood sugars around 6 to 8 mmol.
- Exercise daily such as riding a stationary bike or swimming.
- Quit smoking.

Inspect your feet and footwear

- Check your feet daily for redness, cuts, blisters, calluses, or swelling.
- Use a mirror if needed or ask a family member to check for you.
- Check for foreign objects in shoes and socks before putting them on.
- Check for rough areas inside your shoes.
- Wear well-fitting socks with no seams or darning.
- Check the skin temperature for warmth (more than the rest of your body).

Find professional help

- See a foot care professional regularly (foot doctor, podiatrist, or foot care nurse).
- Use footwear specialists to fit your shoes (pedorthist) or make orthotic inserts (orthotist).

Expect your feet to last a Lifetime

- Wash and dry your feet daily. Make sure you dry gently between each toe.
- Avoid extreme water temperatures. Test the water with a thermometer.
- Do not use heating pads on your feet.
- Do not soak feet.

How to break in new shoes

Follow this schedule for breaking in new shoes:

1 st week	Wear for 2 hours/day
2 nd week	Wear for 4 hour/day
3 rd week	Wear for 6 hours/day
4 th week	Wear for 8 hours/day
After that	Wear full time

Throw away shoes that give you an ulcer.

Ask a footwear specialist to check your shoes if a shoe gives you a thick callus in less than 4 weeks of wear.

When to get help

Arrange to see your family doctor when:

- The temperature of your skin in an area increases (by about 2°C).
- You notice any redness or swelling of your foot.
- You have an open sore draining fluid.

Diabetic Foot Ulcers

How to keep your feet healthy



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Prevent foot ulcers
Help foot ulcers heal fast
Keep foot ulcers from coming back

Complex Wound Clinic



www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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What is Diabetic Foot Ulcer?

It is an open sore or wound on the foot. Anyone who has diabetes can get a foot ulcer. The most common place to get a foot ulcer is on the bottom of the foot.



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Ulcers are usually caused by a combination of:

- loss of feeling in the foot
- poor blood flow
- foot deformities such as hammer toes or claw toes
- repeated friction or pressure on the area

The aim is to:

- ✓ Reduce the chances of getting a foot ulcer.
- ✓ Promote healing of foot ulcers.
- ✓ Reduce the chances of foot ulcers returning.

Who gets foot ulcers?

Even though anyone with diabetes can get a foot ulcer, some people are more likely to get one than others.

You have a greater chance of a foot ulcer if one or more of these factors apply to you:

- calluses
- loss of sensation in the feet (peripheral sensory neuropathy)
- foot deformity
- injury to the foot and wearing poorly fitting shoes
- toe amputation(s)
- limited joint movement
- previous foot ulcer
- uncontrolled high blood sugar (>9mmol)
- have diabetes for a long time
- poor eyesight, partial sight, or blindness
- long-term kidney disease
- over 80 years of age

What affects wound healing?

All of the following slow wound healing:

- Infection of the wound
- Uncontrolled blood sugars
- Poor blood flow to the feet
- Pressure over the wound from shoes
- Smoking
- Inadequate nutrition
- Swelling of the feet
- Not following the treatment plan
- Using the incorrect bandaging for the wound

Wound healing is helped with:

- Removing pressure (offloading)
- Removing calluses
- Removing infected and dead tissue

**'It's not what you put on a wound...
It's what to remove.'**

Standard orthotic or therapeutic foot wear should not be used to treat diabetic foot ulcers.



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What is offloading?

'Offloading' means to reduce the pressure on the foot.

There are different ways offloading can be done, either with various foot devices or surgery.

A. Non-removable Offloading Devices

Total Contact Cast – considered the 'gold standard' for diabetic foot ulcers



Instant Total Contact Cast – a removable walking cast wrapped with a bandage or fiberglass



B. Removable Offloading Devices

Half Shoes – takes the pressure off the heel or fore foot



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C. Surgical Offloading

Surgical repair or removal of deformities or ulcers