



Diabetic Foot Care

Each individual is responsible for their own health. Wearing what your doctor has prescribed is only a small part of your care. There are many factors that will affect the health of your limb: following your doctor's orders, good hygiene, and proper diet are a few.

Diabetes can be a very complicated and progressive disease. Diabetes often causes nerve damage leaving the foot insensitive to pain. The diabetic foot is in danger of irritations and infection that may not be noticed because of the lack of feeling. Complications from diabetes may also decrease blood flow to the foot making it more difficult for a sore to heal. High blood sugar can also decrease the body's ability to fight infection.

It is important that you follow instructions to prevent serious consequences such as ulcerations and possible amputation. Keeping your blood sugar level in control and taking care of your feet can help to prevent a serious problem in the future.

Following your physicians' advice and treatment plan is always recommended and preferred, the following list is to be used as general guidelines on how to care for diabetic feet.

Foot Inspection and Care:

- **Inspect your feet daily.** Check carefully between the toes. Look for cuts or sores, changes in skin color, bleeding, tenderness, swelling, and areas of high temperature. Any major change should be reported to your doctor immediately. If necessary, use a hand mirror to check the bottoms of your feet. If you have poor eyesight, enlist the help of a family member or friend to inspect your feet. Have a thorough foot examination by a professional every 3 to 6 months. If you have had problems with your feet, the examinations by your doctor should be more frequent.
- Bathe your feet daily in lukewarm water with mild soap and rinse thoroughly. Pat your feet dry with a soft towel making sure to dry between the toes. Do not soak your feet. It may be helpful to use a light dusting of talcum powder or cornstarch to keep the skin between your toes dry.
- Lotion is okay to prevent cracking on the tops or bottoms of the feet. Never use lotion or cream between the toes.

Important advice to follow:

- Always wear clean socks and preferably those without seams. Do not wear socks that are too tight and discard socks with holes.
- Wear shoes that fit properly. Shoes should be well cushioned and roomy. Don't wear shoes with high heels or pointed toes and avoid plastic or vinyl shoes.
 - If necessary, your doctor may prescribe extra-depth or custom-molded shoes.
- Shake your shoes before putting them on and remove your insoles frequently to remove any pebbles or debris that may be trapped in your shoes.
- Follow the wearing schedule provided by your podiatrist/orthotist.
- Keep your feet elevated when you are sitting.
- Be more active. Walking, dancing, swimming, and bicycling are easy on the feet.
- Keep your weight in check.
- Check your feet often in cold weather to prevent frostbite.
- KEEP YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVEL UNDER CONTROL!!!

Avoid the following:

- Do not wear shoes without socks.
- Do not wear sandals with thongs between the toes.
- Do not attempt to trim your own toenails, corns, or calluses or use commercial corn remedies unless advised by your doctor.
- Do not walk barefoot, not even indoors.
- Avoid extremes of heat or cold. Never use hot water bottles or heating pads.
- Avoid wearing anything tight around the legs or ankles.
- Do not use adhesive tape on the feet.
- Do not sit or sleep with legs or ankles crossed.
- Avoid smoking.
- Avoid alcohol.