

Low Risk

Diabetes Foot Care information and advice leaflet



Diabetes is a lifelong condition which can cause foot problems. Some of these problems can occur because the nerves and blood vessels supplying your feet are damaged.

This can affect:

- ◇ the feeling in your feet (peripheral neuropathy); and
- ◇ the circulation in your feet (ischaemia).

These changes can be very gradual and you may not notice them. This is why it is essential you have your feet screened every year.

Your foot screening has shown that you do not have nerve or blood vessel damage at present and so you are currently at **low risk** of developing foot complications because of your diabetes.

Controlling your diabetes, cholesterol and blood pressure, and having your feet screened every year by a suitably trained professional, will help to reduce the risk of developing problems with your feet.

If you smoke, you are strongly advised to stop. Smoking affects your circulation and can lead to amputation.

As your feet are in good condition, you will not need regular podiatry treatment.

If you follow the simple advice in this leaflet, you should be able to carry out your own foot care unless you develop a specific problem.

Advice on keeping your feet healthy

Check your feet every day

You should check your feet every day for any blisters, breaks in the skin, pain or any signs of infection such as swelling, heat or redness.

Wash your feet every day

You should wash your feet every day in warm water and with a mild soap. Rinse them thoroughly and dry them carefully, especially between the toes. Do not soak your feet as this can damage your skin.

Moisturise your feet every day

If your skin is dry, apply a moisturising cream every day, avoiding the areas between your toes.

Toenails

Cut or file your toenails regularly, following the curve of the end of your toe. Use a nail file to make sure that there are no sharp edges which could press into the next toe. Do not cut down the sides of your nails as you may create a 'spike' of nail which could result in an ingrowing toenail.

Socks, stockings and tights

You should change your socks, stockings or tights every day. They should not have bulky seams and the tops should not be elasticated.

Avoid walking barefoot

If you walk barefoot you risk injuring your feet by stubbing your toes and standing on sharp objects which can damage the skin

Check your shoes

Check the bottom of your shoes before putting them on to make sure that nothing sharp such as a pin, nail or glass has pierced the outer sole. Also, run your hand inside each shoe to check that no small objects such as small stones have fallen in.

Badly-fitting shoes

Badly-fitting shoes are a common cause of irritation or damage to feet. The professional who screened your feet may give you advice about the shoes you are wearing and about buying new shoes.

Minor cuts and blisters

If you check your feet and discover any breaks in the skin, minor cuts or blisters, you should cover them with a sterile dressing and check them every day. Do **not** burst blisters. If the problems do not heal within a few days, or if you notice any signs of infection (swelling, heat, redness or pain), contact your podiatry department or GP (their contact numbers are over the page).

Over-the-counter corn remedies

Do not use over-the-counter corn remedies. They are not recommended for anyone with diabetes as they can cause damage to the skin that can create problems.

Individual advice

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USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES

www.diabetes.org.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.feetforlife.org

Local contact numbers

Podiatry Department:

GP Surgery:

SPOTTING A FOOT ATTACK

- Is your foot red, warm or swollen?
- Is there a break in the skin or any discharge (or oozing) on to your socks or stockings?
- Do you feel unwell?

You may not have pain even with a visible wound.

Contact your GP, Podiatrist or Nurse immediately (or a member of the Foot Protection Service).

If unavailable go to your nearest out of hours healthcare service or your A&E department.