



# Diabetes Foot Care

## Foot Care at Home

- **Take care of your diabetes.**

Maintain healthy blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. This can help to prevent or delay diabetes-related foot problems.

- **Check your feet every day.**

You may have serious foot problems without feeling pain. Check for sores, cuts, bruises, rashes, blisters, red spots, swelling and ingrown toenails. Use your hands to feel for hot or cold spots, plus bumps or dry skin. Look at the tops, bottoms and sides of your feet as well as your toes & in between. Use a mirror to help you see the bottoms and sides of your feet.

- **Wash your feet every day.**

Use soap and warm water. Dry gently and thoroughly with a soft towel.

- **Keep your skin soft and smooth.**

Apply lotion to the tops, bottoms and sides of feet, but not between your toes.

Avoid trapping moisture between your toes, which can cause problems.

- **Practice good foot hygiene.**

Trim your toenails straight across, then file the edges. Rounded edges prevent ingrown toenails.

- **Wear shoes and socks at all times.**

Do not go barefoot, even indoors; it's easy to step on something and not feel it. Choose socks that won't irritate your feet, such as seamless socks.

Protect your feet by wearing shoes or slippers, even around the house or at the beach. Before you put on your shoes, feel inside them to make



sure there are no pebbles, foreign objects or rough edges that might injure your feet.

- **Keep blood flowing.**

Put your feet up when you're sitting. Wiggle your toes for five minutes 2-3 times per day. Don't cross your legs for long periods of time.

- **Be more active.**

Walking, dancing, bicycling and swimming are great ways to move that are easy on your feet. Always include a warm-up and cool-down period. Wear athletic shoes that fit well and provide good support.

- **Don't smoke.**

Smoking damages both nerves and blood vessels. It is one of the most significant contributing factors to diabetic complications, especially in the feet.

- **Get started now.**

Begin taking care of your feet today. Set a time every day to check your feet. Note the date of your next doctor appointment. Most importantly, stick to your foot care program.

## **Foot Care in the Doctor's Office**

If you have a foot injury, call your health care provider. Do not try to take care of foot problems yourself. Some commercial products can harm your skin, making foot problems worse.

For each medical visit, remove your shoes and socks so your provider can inspect your feet.

At a foot exam your doctor will check your skin, muscles, bones, nerves and blood circulation.

Be sure to ask about education for the unique needs of your feet.

Note that for those people with documented diabetes related foot problems, Medicare and many insurance companies may provide you with a new pair of custom shoes once a year to protect your feet from complications. Be sure to ask your provider about this benefit. It will be prescribed just like a prescription.

