

DIABETIC FOOT CARE

It is very important for diabetics to take the necessary precautions to prevent all foot related injuries. Due to the consequences of neuropathy, daily observation of the feet is critical. When a diabetic patient takes the necessary preventative footcare measures, it greatly reduces the risks of serious foot conditions.

Do's

1. Inspect your feet daily for blisters, cuts, and scratches. The use of a mirror can aid in seeing the bottom of your feet. Always check between your toes.
2. Wash you feet daily. Dry carefully, especially between your toes.
3. Avoid extreme temperatures. Test water with your hands or elbow before bathing.
4. If your feet feel cold at night, wear socks.
5. Inspect the insides of your shoes daily for foreign objects, nail points, torn linings, and rough areas.
6. For dry feet, use a very thin coat of lubricating oil such as baby oil. Apply this after bathing and drying your feet.
7. Shoes should be fitted by a footcare specialist and be comfortable at the time of purchase. Shoes should be made with leather.
8. In the winter months take special precautions. Wear wool socks and protective foot gear, such as fleece lined boots.
9. Cut your nails straight across.
10. See your physician regularly and be sure to have your feet examined at each visit.

Dont's

1. Do not smoke
2. Do not apply hot water bottles or heating pads. Do not soak your feet in hot water.
3. Do not walk on hot surfaces such as sandy beaches or on the cement around swimming pools.
4. Do not walk barefooted.
5. Do not use chemical agents for the removal of corns and calluses. Do not use strong antiseptic solutions on your feet.
6. Do not use adhesive tape on your feet.
7. Do not soak your feet.
8. Do not wear mended stockings and avoid stockings with seams.
9. Do not use oil or cream between your toes.

10. Do not wear shoes without stockings.
11. Do not wear sandals with thongs between the toes.
12. Do not cut corns or calluses; see your physician.
13. Do not cross your legs. This can cause pressure on the nerves and blood vessels.

Diabetic Footcare Tips

1. Did you know that Medicare covers extra depth footwear for diabetic patients? Ask your doctor if you qualify for special shoes covered by Medicare.
2. Wear socks that fit you properly. Choose socks that are made of cotton or wool. Be cautious not to wear socks that are too tight that can cut off circulation to the feet.
3. Place protective slippers or shoes right beside your bed to wear as soon as you get out of bed to avoid walking barefooted.
4. The best time to trim toenails is after bathing. The nails are softer and easier to trim at that time. Cut your toenails straight across and not too short. Do not cut into the corners of your nails. Consult a doctor if your nails are too thick and difficult to cut.
5. Wiggle your toes and move your ankles up and down for 5 minutes, 2 or 3 times a day. This increases the blood flow to your feet.

Diabetic Foot Care Overview

Diabetes mellitus (DM) represents several diseases in which high blood glucose levels over time can damage the nerves, kidneys, eyes, and blood vessels. Diabetes can also decrease the body's ability to fight infection. When diabetes is not well controlled, damage to the organs and impairment of the immune system is likely. Foot problems commonly develop in people with diabetes and can quickly become serious.

- With damage to the nervous system, a person with diabetes may not be able to feel his or her feet properly. Normal sweat secretion and oil production that lubricates the skin of the foot is impaired. These factors together can lead to abnormal pressure on the skin, bones, and joints of the foot during walking and can lead to breakdown of the skin of the foot. Sores may develop.

Damage to blood vessels and impairment of the immune system from diabetes make it difficult to heal these wounds. Bacterial infection of the skin, connective tissues, muscles, and bones can then occur. These infections can develop into gangrene. Because of the poor blood flow, antibiotics cannot get to the site of the infection easily. Often, the only treatment for this is amputation of the foot or leg. If the infection spreads to the bloodstream, this process can be life-threatening.

People with diabetes must be fully aware of how to prevent foot problems before they occur, to recognize problems early, and to seek the right treatment when problems do occur. Although treatment for diabetic foot problems has improved, prevention - including good control of blood sugar level - remains the best way to prevent diabetic complications.

- People with diabetes should learn how to examine their own feet and how to recognize the early signs and symptoms of diabetic foot problems.
- They should also learn what is reasonable to manage routine at home foot care, how to recognize when to call the doctor, and how to recognize when a problem has become serious enough to seek emergency treatment

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