

What You Should Know About

Diabetes and Foot Care



People with diabetes may sometimes lose feeling in their feet. This is called **diabetic neuropathy**. It is caused when diabetes damages the nerves going to your feet. If

you lose feeling in your feet because of diabetes, you may not feel pain when you hurt yourself. You may also feel numbness in your feet, or tingling in your feet and hands. You might feel “pins and needles” in your feet or feel like you are walking on pillows.

Is This Serious?

Yes! You might get a foot infection or ulcer and not even know it. An infection or ulcer on your feet can be very serious. If the infection cannot be treated with medicine alone, the toe or foot may need to be amputated (cut off). Diabetes is the number 2 cause of amputations in the USA. Keeping your blood sugar under control is important to prevent infections. Taking good care of your feet is also important to prevent foot problems and amputations.

Foot Care Tips

Examine Your Feet

- Examine your legs and feet every day.
- Look between the toes.
- Look at the bottoms of your feet. (Use a hand mirror if this will help.)
- Look for cuts, scratches, blisters, cracks in the skin, and sores.

Wash Your Feet

- Wash your feet every day and dry them carefully, especially between the toes.
- Test the temperature of the bath water with your hand (not your feet) before you step in to make sure it is not too hot.
- Apply moisturizer to your feet but not between your toes.

Groom Your Feet

- Cut your toenails straight across.
- If you cannot cut your own toenails, go to the podiatrist (foot doctor) regularly to have your toenails cut.

Wear Proper Foot Apparel

- Don't go barefoot.
- Don't wear shoes without socks.
- Don't wear shoes that are too small or tight.
- Don't wear the same shoes everyday.
- Check inside your shoes for anything sharp before you put them on.

DON'T WAIT! SEE YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Blisters, cuts, open sores, infection, or ulcers on your feet or legs
- Cracked dry skin on the bottom of your feet
- Athlete's foot (fungus infection)
- Fungus in nails or between toes
- Ingrown toenails
- Skin infection (called “cellulitis”) – red, warm, painful skin
- See the podiatrist if you have corns and calluses.