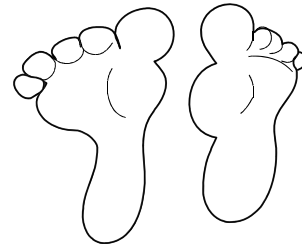


Taking Care of Your Feet



Protect your feet from foot ulcers and amputation by checking for risk factors and by getting early treatment

Guidelines for Diabetes Foot Care

- **If you have diabetes, have your feet checked yearly for sensation by a doctor to detect high-risk foot conditions.**
- **If you have neuropathy, have a nurse or a doctor look at your feet at each visit.**
- **If you see a red area, blister, or cut on your foot, contact your doctor if there is no sign of healing in 24 hours.**

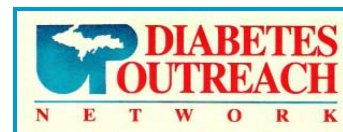
Risk factors for diabetic foot ulcers and amputations:

1. Loss of feeling in your legs and/or feet.
2. Foot changes (bunions, corns, calluses or hammertoes).
3. Decreased circulation, causing leg pain with exertion that is relieved by 5 or 10 minutes of rest.
4. Skin or nail conditions (dry rough skin, athlete's foot, ingrown toenails or fungal infections of the nails).
5. Previous foot or leg ulcer.
6. Poor control of blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
7. Smoking or use of tobacco products.

Those at highest risk of amputations:

- **having diabetes ten or more years**
- **male**
- **smokers**
- **members of certain ethnic groups (African American, Hispanic and Native American).**

U.P. Diabetes Outreach Network
Strengthening Diabetes Care in Upper Michigan Since 1985
(906) 228-9203
www.diabetesinmichigan.org



Tips for Foot Care

CHECK FEET

- Check your feet daily for cuts, blisters, bruises, cracks, red areas, or any changes in shape.
- If you cannot bend to see all parts of your feet clearly, use a plastic mirror or ask a family member to help.
- Get a complete foot exam by your doctor or health care professional at least once a year.

SKIN CARE

- Wash feet daily in warm (not hot) water. Dry thoroughly, especially between toes. Test water with elbow or thermometer to make sure the water is not too hot.
- Do not soak feet.
- If skin is dry, use lotion on top and bottom (but **not** between the toes).
- Smooth corns or calluses gently with pumice stone. Do not use corn plasters or chemicals.

TOENAIL CARE

- Cut toenails following the curve of the nail.
- File sharp edges of toenails with emery board.
- Cut toenails after bathing, when nails are soft and easy to trim.
- If toenails are too thick or you can not see well, have toenails cut by a podiatrist.

KEEP THE BLOOD FLOWING

- Put your feet up when sitting.
- Wiggle your toes and move your ankles up and down for 5 minutes, 2-3 times a day.
- Do not cross your legs for long periods of time.
- Keep blood sugar and blood pressure as close to normal as you can.
- If you smoke or use any tobacco products, **STOP!**

PROTECTION

- Always wear shoes and socks, even indoors. **NEVER GO BAREFOOT!**
- Make sure shoes fit well.
- Never buy shoes with open toes or heels.
- Break shoes in slowly. Wear new shoes for only 1 or 2 hours at a time.
- Look for shoes with a roomy toe area and cushioned sole.
- Feel inside your shoes before putting them on each time to make sure the lining is smooth and no objects are inside.
- Always wear socks or stockings with your shoes. Socks made of natural fibers (cotton or wool) are best or polypropylene dry socks.
- Avoid knee-high stockings, socks with tight elastic or darned socks.
- Protect your feet from hot and cold. Wear shoes at the beach or on hot pavement.
- Do not use heating pads or hot water bottles on feet.
- Protect feet against sunburn with sunscreen lotion.
- Wear socks at night if your feet get cold.