

Diabetic Foot Care

Keeping your feet healthy is an important part of your overall health. Your feet need special care and attention and you can avoid serious complications by following some simple guidelines:

- **Wash your feet daily.** Test the water with your elbow or forearm first to be sure it is not too hot.
- **Keep your skin soft and smooth.** If your feet are dry rub a thin layer of moisturizer after bathing but do not get the cream between your toes.
- **Trim nails carefully and straight across.** Seek professional help if you cannot do this safely yourself.
- **Inspect your feet daily.** Look at your bare feet for dryness, cracks, red spots, sores and blisters. Pay close attention to the soles and in between your toes. If you cannot see the bottoms of your feet, use a mirror or ask someone for help.
- **Never go barefoot, either indoors or outdoors.**
- **Buy only shoes that fit your feet.** Have new shoes fit by a professional. Walk around in shoes. Inspect both feet in and out of shoes to be sure of correct fit.
- **Choose shoes made of soft leather or athletic material that can mold to the shape of your feet.**
- **Buy new shoes late in the day.** Feet swell and shoes that fit in the morning may feel too tight later in the day.
- **Never buy/wear sandals or shoes with open toes.**
- **Always inspect the insides of your shoes before wearing.** Make sure the lining is smooth and there are no objects inside.
- **Never wear shoes without socks or stockings.** Do not use garters or elastics to hold up socks.
- **Take care of your diabetes.** Work with your health care team to keep your blood glucose in your target range.
- **Get active and keep blood flowing to your feet.** Plan a physical activity program with your health care team. When seated for long periods of time, elevate your feet and wiggle your toes/rotate your ankles periodically.
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking causes constriction of your blood vessels, further limiting circulation to your extremities.
- **Do see your doctor regularly and remove shoes and socks at every visit.** Remind your doctor to examine your feet if necessary.

If not properly treated, the following list of problems may lead to broken skin, ulcerations, infections, or chronic wounds. When you have a chronic condition that makes wound healing difficult and any of the following happens to you, consult your doctor:

- **Development of a wound, especially on the lower leg or foot.**
- **Severely dry, cracked or peeling skin.**
- **Blisters**
- **Bumps with puss.**
- **Dermatitis (dry or weeping).**
- **Allergic reactions.**
- **Multiple or extensive skin tears.**
- **Fissures of the skin on the feet, especially the heels.**