

NORTH SCOTTSDALE PODIATRY GROUP

FOOT FACTS: DIABETIC FEET

Caring for your Diabetic Feet:

1. **DO NOT SMOKE.** It decreases the blood supply to your feet.
2. **NEVER** walk barefoot, neither indoors nor out.
3. Examine your feet daily for redness, warmth, blisters, ulcers, scratches, cuts and nail problems from shoes or other sources. Look at the bottom of your feet and between the toes. Use a mirror or have someone else look for you.
4. Call your doctor immediately if you experience any injury to your foot. Even a minor injury is an emergency for a patient with diabetes.
5. Examine your shoes for foreign objects, protruding nails and rough spots inside before putting them on. Look and feel.
6. Buy shoes late in the day. Never buy shoes that need "breaking in." They should be immediately comfortable. Request shoes with deep toe boxes and shoes made of leather or other flexible upper material.
7. Do not wear new shoes more than two hours at a time. Rotate your shoes. Do not wear the same ones every day.
8. Never wear sandals or flip flops.
9. Lubricate your entire foot if your skin is dry, but avoid putting cream between your toes. Having your feet a little wet while applying the lotion helps your skin absorb it better. You can try Amlactin, Cetaphil, Lubriderm, Olive Oil, Vitamin E Oil, or Eucerin cream.
10. Do not soak your feet. Skin can break down and won't heal well.
11. Keep feet away from heat sources (heating pads, hot water bottles, electric blankets, radiator, fireplaces). You can burn your feet without knowing it. Water temperature should be less than 92 degrees. Estimate the temperature with your elbow or bath thermometer (you can get one in any store that sells infant products).
12. Don't use any tape or sticky products such as corn plasters on your feet. They can rip your skin.
13. Do not file down, remove or shave calluses or corns yourself. These should be taken care of by your physician or someone your physician recommends.
14. Do not use any chemicals or strong antiseptic solutions on your feet. Iodine, salicylic acid, corn/callus removers and hydrogen peroxide are potentially dangerous.
15. Trim your toenails straight across, or have a medical provider do it for you.
16. Do not wear stockings or socks with tight elastic backs and do not use garters. Wear only light-colored socks and do not wear any socks with holes. Always wear socks with your shoes.
17. In the winter, wear wool socks and protective footwear. Avoid getting your feet wet in the snow and rain and avoid letting toes get cold.
18. If the circulation in your feet is impaired, tell your medical doctor so he/she can take this into account when prescribing medication for high blood pressure or heart disease.

NORTH SCOTTSDALE PODIATRY GROUP

FOOT FACTS: DIABETIC FEET

Diabetic Foot Overview:

If a doctor has ever said you had an elevated blood sugar level -- even just once -- you are at risk for diabetes. About 18 million people have the disease. Nervous system impairment (neuropathy) is a major complication that may cause you to lose feeling in your feet or hands. This means you won't know right away if you hurt yourself. The problem affects about 60 to 70 percent of people with diabetes.

Foot problems are a big risk. All people with diabetes should monitor their feet. If you don't, the consequences can be severe, including amputation.

Minor injuries become major emergencies before you know it. With a diabetic foot, a wound as small as a blister from wearing a shoe that's too tight can cause a lot of damage. Diabetes may also decrease your blood flow, so your injuries can be slow to heal. If your wound is not healing, it's at risk for infection. As a diabetic, your infection may spread quickly, and if you have any loss of sensation (neuropathy) you may not recognize that the problem is getting worse.

If you have diabetes, you should inspect your feet every day. Look for puncture wounds, bruises, pressure areas, redness, warmth, blisters, ulcers, scratches, cuts and nail problems. Get someone to help you, or use a mirror. Feel each foot for swelling. Examine between your toes. Check six major locations on the bottom of each foot: tip of the big toe, base of the little toes, base of the middle toes, heel, outside edge of the foot and across the ball of the foot. Check for sensation in each foot. If you find any injury -- no matter how slight -- don't try to treat it yourself. Go to a medical doctor right away.



You should also see your podiatrist for a regular diabetic feet checkup.

Taking Care of Your Feet:

- Wash your feet every day with mild soap and warm water.
- Test the water temperature with your hand first.
- Don't soak your feet.
- When drying them, pat each foot with a towel and be careful between your toes.
- Use quality lotion to keep the skin of your feet soft and moist -- but don't put any lotion between your toes.
- Trim your toe nails straight across. Avoid cutting the corners.
- Use a nail file or emery board. If you find an ingrown toenail, see your doctor.
- Don't use antiseptic solutions, drugstore medications, heating pads or sharp instruments on your feet.
- Don't put your feet on radiators or in front of the fireplace.
- Always keep your feet warm.
- Wear loose socks to bed.
- Don't get your feet wet in snow or rain.
- Wear warm socks and shoes in winter.
- Don't smoke or sit cross-legged for long periods as both decrease blood supply to your feet.

Advice About Shoes and Socks:

- Never walk barefoot or in sandals or thongs. Choose and wear your shoes carefully. Buy new shoes late in the day when your feet are larger. Buy shoes that are comfortable without a "breaking in" period. Check how your shoe fits in width, length, back, bottom of heel and sole. Avoid pointed-toe styles and high heels. Try to get shoes made with leather upper material and deep toe boxes. Wear new shoes for only two hours or less at a time. Don't wear the same pair everyday. Inspect the inside of each shoe before putting it on and feel inside it with your hand. Don't lace your shoes too tightly or loosely.
- Choose socks and stockings carefully. Wear clean, dry socks every day. Avoid socks with holes or wrinkles. Thin cotton socks are more absorbent for summer wear. Square-toes socks will not squeeze your toes. Avoid stockings with elastic tops. Seamless socks are available for those with neuropathy. Consider using compression stockings if your feet tend to swell.