

Quick Guide to Diabetic Foot Care

People with diabetes are at risk to develop damage to the nerves in the feet. It is very important to take good care of your feet to prevent wounds and other problems before they develop.

What you can do to help:

- Track and control your blood sugar : better control means less risk of nerve damage and other complications
- Stop smoking: tobacco use can cause problems with blood flow and make nerve damage worse
- Get regular exercise and avoid crossing your legs as it can interfere with the blood flow to your feet
- Check your feet everyday:
 - Use a mirror if you can't see the bottom of your feet or ask someone else to help
 - Make sure you check between your toes
 - See your doctor early for any signs of blisters, cracks or injury to the skin : these can quickly become wounds
- Make sure you inform all of your medical providers that you have diabetes. Have a medical provider check your feet at least once a year
 - Check skin and sensation—can you tell if something sharp is touching your foot?
 - Know if you have a loss of sensation
- Wash and dry your feet thoroughly at least once a day
 - Use mild soap
 - Be sure to dry carefully between the toes
 - Do NOT soak your feet
- If you have a loss of sensation, have a medical provider trim your toenails and take care of any corns and calluses
- Keep skin soft and protected by applying lotion to tops and bottoms BUT NOT BETWEEN YOUR TOES; put powder between the toes to help keep the area dry
- Always wear shoes and socks—going barefoot increases chance of foot injury
- Make sure shoes fit properly:
 - Stand on a piece of paper and trace the outline of your foot
 - Then trace the outline of your shoe & check to make sure your foot has plenty of room: at least 1/2 inch between longest toe and end of shoe
- Choose socks made from natural fibers
- Protect your feet from hot and cold— do not use your feet to check the temperature of your bath water; do not walk on hot surfaces like sandy beaches or the cement around swimming pools without wearing shoes