

Happy Feet with Diabetes

TAKING STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Diabetes can lead to complications throughout your body, even in your feet. In people with diabetes, the **feet face a two-sided attack**. First, diabetes can **slow blood flow to the feet**, which can make it harder for cuts, sores, and blisters to heal. Second, diabetes can **lead to nerve damage** - or neuropathy - that causes your feet to go numb. When this occurs, it becomes difficult to tell when you have an issue, such as a sore, blister, callus, or cut on your foot. If you can't feel cuts and blisters on your feet, you may be more likely to develop ulcers or infections.

By properly controlling your diabetes and keeping a close eye on your feet, you can prevent these diabetes-related issues.

5 SIMPLE STEPS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR FEET

1) **Make an appointment with a podiatrist.**

A podiatrist is a doctor who specializes in treating foot problems and can identify early signs of nerve damage and poor circulation. Experts recommend scheduling a foot exam with a podiatrist once a year.

2) **Check your feet every day.**

Set up a time to check your feet every day. Check for calluses, sores, cuts, red spots, blisters, and swelling. If it is hard to reach your feet, try using a mirror to see the bottoms of your feet. Furthermore, ask your primary care provider to check your feet at every visit.

3) **Wash your feet every day.**

Wash your feet with mild soap and warm water. Never use hot water, and do not soak your feet. Be sure to dry your feet well with a soft towel, especially in between the toes. Make sure to test the water with your hands first to make sure the water is not too hot.

Wear the right shoes.

4) **Make sure you wear shoes that are comfortable.** Avoid wearing shoes that are too tight or too loose. Your toes should have enough room to move. Some patients wear shoes designed specifically for their feet (orthopedic shoes). Ask your podiatrist if you qualify for orthopedic shoes.

Apply lotion to keep the skin of your feet soft and smooth.

5) **Apply lotion on the top and bottom of the feet.** Avoid applying lotion in between the toes because wetness in between the toes can result in fungal infections.



QUICK TIP!

Check with your podiatrist about how best to neaten your toenails and care for calluses, bunions, corns, and warts.

If you develop any of these growths or lesions, do not use sharp objects, such as nail clippers, nail files, scissors, or chemical wart removers. These may cause you harm.

Did you know?

You can hurt your feet and not even know it. To prevent foot injury, do not walk barefoot. Instead, wear proper footwear at all times, even when at home. Always check your shoes before putting them on, as there may be objects in your shoes that can hurt your feet.