

Patient information

Diabetes Foot Care Advice Increased Risk - Reduced Circulation, or Nerve Damage, or Foot Deformity

Podiatry Department - Therapies

Diabetes is a life long condition, which can cause foot problems such as ulcers and infections. These problems can happen as a result of damage to nerves in your feet, this is called neuropathy (affecting feeling), and damage to blood vessels reducing circulation.

Your examination today has shown that you have developed nerve damage, or reduced circulation, or have a foot deformity. Because of this you need to take extra care.

Signs of nerve damage include:

- Pain, tingling and numbness in your legs and feet.
- Loss of ability to detect sensation of pain and temperature.
- Changes in foot shape.

The Do's

- See a Podiatrist regularly who will check your feet, and provide advice and appropriate treatment.
- Wash your feet daily, dry thoroughly, especially between your toes.
- Check the temperature of the bath water with your elbow or a thermometer.
- Examine your feet daily for broken skin, blisters, and discoloration or swelling; you may need help from a carer or relative. Using a mirror may also be of some help.
- Clean any breaks you have on your skin, cover with a sterile dressing and seek help.
- Moisturise feet daily. Avoid in between toes.
- Make sure your shoes fit well i.e. the correct length, width and depth with soft uppers and no bulky seams. Lace ups are good as they prevent the foot sliding about in the shoe. Socks should be free of bulky seams and elasticated tops.
- If shop shoes do not fit your feet, you may need to be referred to an Orthotist (shoe maker). Wear the shoes and insoles made by the Orthotist, if you have them.
- Examine your shoes regularly for stones, nails and other small objects, which may damage your skin.

The Don'ts

- Don't wear ill-fitting shoes – they may rub leading to blisters.
- Don't soak your feet – this can lead to your skin splitting.
- Don't walk barefoot – this is one of the most common causes of foot injuries.
- Don't burst blisters – this may lead to infection.
- Don't sit too near heaters or use hot water bottles or electric blankets to warm feet up.
- Don't be tempted to poke down edges of nails with scissors or other sharp implements to ease an ingrown toenail.
- Don't remove corns or hard skin yourself with corn remedies as these contain strong acids.
- Don't smoke - this reduces the circulation to your feet.

Important Information

If you notice any signs of infection - swelling, heat, redness or pain, contact your family doctor (GP), Podiatrist, local walk-in-centre or local diabetes clinic urgently.

General advice

It is important to try and maintain good control of your blood sugar levels, as nerve damage is associated with poor diabetes control. Blood vessels are also damaged by a high fat diet and smoking.

By keeping to the diet recommended by your dietician, taking regular exercise and stopping smoking you can help preserve and improve your circulation.

Individual Advice:

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

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