

Foot Care for People with Diabetes



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1 INSPECT

- Check your feet every day. Look for scratches, cracks between the toes, blisters, corns and other sores. Watch for swelling and changes in the temperature or colour of your feet and legs. If you cannot see all parts of your feet, use a mirror. Another person can also help you inspect your feet.
- Your doctor should check your feet at each appointment. Other health-care providers involved in managing your diabetes (e.g., an endocrinologist) may also check your feet during your appointments.



2 BATHE

- Wash your feet daily with warm (not hot) soapy water. Check the water temperature with your elbow. You may not be able to tell how hot the water is with your hands or feet.
- Do not soak your feet. Dry your feet well, especially between the toes.
- Do not scrub with abrasive cloths or loofas.



3 MOISTURIZE

- Apply moisturizer to the tops and bottoms of your feet. Do not apply lotion, cream or oil between the toes. You can use a small amount of foot powder on your feet. Avoid putting foot powder in your shoes or in between toes as it may cake and rub against the foot.



4 TRIM

- Cut your toenails straight across. Have a professional cut your nails, especially if you have vision problems, if the nails are thick, or if you have poor circulation or nerve defects in your feet.
- Do not treat your own corns, calluses or warts with over-the-counter medications, as they may damage your skin. See a professional trained in foot care if you have corns or calluses.
- Do not treat your own ingrown toenails or slivers.



5 SHOES AND SOCKS

- Always wear shoes and breathable, clean, soft socks or nylons. Do not wear socks that have been mended, that have holes or seams that may irritate your feet, or that are too tight. Change your socks every day.
- Buy shoes in the late afternoon to avoid purchasing shoes that become tight when your feet swell slightly by that time. Choose insoles that are fitted specifically for you rather than off-the-shelf insoles, as they may cause blisters if fitted incorrectly.
- Select shoes that fit well and are preferably made of breathable material (e.g., leather). Avoid sandals, plastic shoes, pointed toes and high heels (more than 5 cm high).
- Check the inside of your shoes for sharp objects or rough spots before you wear them.
- Protect your feet at the beach. Sand, shells and rocks can damage your feet. Wear protective shoes.



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6 AVOID EXTREME COLD & HEAT (INCLUDING THE SUN)

- Do not use heating pads, electric blankets or hot water bottles on your feet, and do not warm your feet by a fireplace.
- Wear warm boots in the winter to help you avoid frostbite.



7 CIRCULATION

- Avoid anything that puts pressure on your feet and legs (such as tight socks or stockings, garters, elastics or knee highs). They may reduce circulation to the legs and feet.
- Avoid smoking.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.
- Do not sit for long periods of time.

8 INJURIES/INFECTIONS

- See your health-care provider as soon as possible if you injure your feet or legs or you see changes in their condition. If you need treatment, it should be started as soon as possible.
- Treat athlete's foot at the first sign of infection.

9 EXERCISE

- Ask your health-care provider to recommend safe exercises to improve circulation.
- Do your exercises every day.



10 CONTROL

- Follow your health-care provider's advice to control your blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure

