



Beacon Ortho
PROSTHETICS AND ORTHOTICS

Diabetic Ulcer Prevention

Daily foot checks and care to keep your feet healthy



Why should I worry about my feet?

Diabetes overtime can lead to nerve damage and poor blood circulation to your legs and feet. As time goes on, a person with diabetes may not feel an injury or blister on their foot. A small unnoticed and untreated injury can become a big problem leading to serious ulcers and complications like infection and amputation. Staying on top of your foot health will ensure your mobility for years.

Overview

When you have diabetes it is important to check your feet everyday.

Use a hand held mirror or set a mirror on the floor to see the bottom of your feet.

If you have trouble with your vision, have someone else look for any problems.

Below are care suggestions and a check list of what you should be watching for.



Daily Care

Wash daily in warm water and mild soap. Don't soak for long as this can create more problems.

Be sure your feet, including between toes, are dried well.

Check your feet, including between toes, to make sure there are no ingrown toe nails, cuts, cracks, or blisters. This can be challenging so using a hand held mirror or one on the floor to see the bottom of your foot.

If you have trouble seeing the bottom of your foot, ask someone to help you.

If you notice any cuts or scratches, wash with mild soap and water and cover with a sensitive skin approved dressing.

Trim your toe nails straight across with no sharp edges. Cutting nails too short can lead to in grown toenails

Use a good lotion on your heels. If there is any excess that is not absorbed wipe it off. Lotion should not go between your toes as this can lead to problems.

Wear fresh and clean socks with well fitting, appropriate shoes. White socks are preferred over darker coloured socks. If you develop a skin break, this will show on a white sock and can alert you to any problems.



Check list

Checking for:	What to do
Breaks in your skin	<p>Check the bottom of your toes, between your toes, and soles of your feet.</p> <p>Gently wash the area with mild soap and pat it dry. Cover it with a sterile non-stick dressing</p> <p>Contact your doctor if the break in the skin becomes red, oozes, or is not healing after 4 days.</p>
Calluses (hardened or thickened areas of skin) Corns (small, hard, and sometimes painful areas of thickened skin often on tops of toes)	<p>Bring any calluses or corns to your provider, especially if they are new or changing.</p> <p>Don't use drugstore over the counter products, or pumice stones unless your provider has recommended and showed you how to use them properly</p> <p>Don't cut, file, or break the skin in any way on purpose</p>
Between the Toes	<p>Be sure you dry between your toes well. If there is moisture here it is easy for bacteria and fungi to grow and lead to infection.</p> <p>If you notice peeling skin, or tiny blisters between your toes, this may be Athlete's foot. Treating this can prevent serious complications.</p> <p>Contact your provider before treating Athletes Foot.</p>

Check list continued

Blisters

Investigate what may have caused the blister. They occur in areas of rubbing or friction like from new shoes, or wearing thicker socks with snug shoes.

Do not break or open the blister

Cover it with a sterile and non stick dressing and paper tape

If the blister gets worse and you see redness, oozing, or it is not showing signs of heal after 4 days, contact your provider.

Skin colour changes

Red

Blue / Black

Seeing redness anywhere could be a sign of irritation from shoes, being too hot, or an early sign of a bigger problem. Double check that your shoes are well fitting.

If you see any blue or black areas it could be from bruising or blood flow concerns. Contact your doctor to let them know.

Sore or Ulcer

Contact your provider right away.

By performing regular foot checks, you will typically see a problem before it becomes an ulcer.

Numbness, Burning, Tingling, and “Pins and Needles” feeling

Contact your provider if you have new numbness or tingling that does not go away when you change your position.

When to see a doctor

If you have any corns, calluses, ingrown toenails, warts, or slivers, do not treat these yourself. Contact your doctor, podiatrist, or foot care nurse for treatment.

If there is any swelling, warmth, redness, with or without pain in your legs or feet, see your doctor or foot care specialist right away.

Have your feet checked by your doctor at least once a year. Also request that you have a neuropathy and loss of circulation screening.

At every diabetes-related doctor visit, take your socks off and ask the provider to check for any concerns.

Ask for help

Having a diagnosis of diabetes or peripheral neuropathy can feel daunting. Know that you are not alone and there are many resources available to keep you mobile and healthy. If you have any questions or concerns about how to care for your feet, give us a call.



**Maintaining healthy feet is a step in the
right direction**

Information provided above is inline with Diabetes Canada Clinical Practice Guidelines. diabetes.ca