



## DIABETES AND YOU:

# Healthy Feet Matter!

It is important to take good care of your feet when you have diabetes. Did you know that diabetes can harm your feet? The good news is that you can take steps to help keep your feet healthy. The tips below will get you started.

### Tips to Keep Your Feet Healthy

1. **Have a podiatrist check your feet at least once a year.**
  - Work with your podiatrist to create a foot care plan to help you take care of your feet.
  - Ask your podiatrist if you qualify for special shoes. These might be covered by Medicare or other insurance plans.
  - Ask your podiatrist to send your exam results to your other doctors after every visit.
  - Be sure to keep your next podiatrist appointment!
2. **Check your feet every day.**
  - Set a time every day to look at your bare feet for calluses, cuts, sores, blisters, red spots, and swelling.
  - Use a mirror to check the bottoms of your feet if you have trouble seeing your feet. You can also ask a family member to help you.
3. **Wash your feet every day.**
  - Use warm water, not hot, to wash your feet. Do not soak your feet.
  - Always check bath water with your hands first to make sure it is not too hot. Sometimes people with diabetes cannot feel how hot the water is with their feet.
  - Dry your feet well. Be sure to dry between the toes.



### How Can Diabetes Harm Your Feet?

- Diabetes is the main cause for nontraumatic loss of a toe, foot, or leg. Almost half of these cases could be prevented with daily foot care.
- People who have diabetes can lose feeling in their feet. When that happens, it can be hard to tell when you have a problem, like a blister, sore, callus, or cut on your foot.
- Diabetes can reduce the amount of blood flow to your feet. Numbness and less blood flow in the feet can slow the time it takes for sores to heal and can lead to foot problems.

### What Is a Podiatrist?

A podiatrist is a medical doctor who specializes in finding and treating foot and ankle problems.

### 4. **Keep the skin soft and smooth.**

- Rub a thin coat of lotion over the tops and bottoms of your feet.
- Do not put lotion between your toes. Wetness between your toes can cause an infection.





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## 5. Check with a podiatrist about the best way to trim your toenails and to care for corns and calluses.

- Over-the-counter products for corns and calluses or sharp objects may harm your skin. Do not use them.
- Wear shoes and socks at all times.

## 6. Do not walk barefoot. It is easy to step on something and hurt your feet.

- Wear shoes that fit well and protect your feet.
- Check inside your shoes before you put them on to make sure the lining is smooth and there are no objects in them.

## 7. Protect your feet from hot and cold.

- Wear shoes at the beach and on hot pavement.
- Do not use hot water bottles or heating pads on your feet. You may burn your feet.

## 8. Keep the blood in your feet flowing.

- Put your feet up on a chair, couch, or footrest when sitting.
- Wiggle your toes and move your ankles up and down for 5 minutes, two or three times a day.
- Do not cross your legs for long periods of time.



### To-do List for Healthy Feet

- Have a podiatrist examine your feet at least once a year.
- Keep your next podiatrist appointment.
- Ask your podiatrist to send your test results to your other doctors after every visit.
- Ask your primary care provider to check your feet at every visit.
- Check your feet every day.
- Keep your blood sugar at a healthy level.

## Manage Your ABCs!

Ask your health care team to help you set and reach goals to manage your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol—also known as the **ABCs** of diabetes. Teach your family about your diabetes and the **ABCs** so they can help you, too.

- **A1c:** The goal set for many people is less than 7% for this blood test, but your doctor might set different goals for you.
- **Blood pressure:** High blood pressure causes heart disease. The goal is less than 140/90 mmHg for most people, but your doctor might set different goals for you.
- **Cholesterol:** LDL or “bad” cholesterol builds up and clogs your blood vessels. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps remove the “bad” cholesterol from your blood vessels. Ask what your cholesterol numbers should be.
- **Don't smoke:** Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for support.

## National Diabetes Education Program

For more information, call 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

or TTY 1-888-232-6348 or visit [www.cdc.gov/info](http://www.cdc.gov/info).

To order resources, visit [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep).



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