

Foot Care 101

For individuals with diabetes

Diabetes and the Foot

Diabetes can cause neuropathy, skin changes, and less blood flow to the feet. Neuropathy is nerve damage that causes the foot to lose feeling and affects almost half of individuals with diabetes¹. Diabetes can cause the skin to become dry, peel, and crack. Due to feeling loss and skin changes, you may injure your foot without knowing. Diabetes also causes poor blood flow which can prevent your foot from being able to heal.



Importance of Foot Exams

Foot examinations can prevent mortality and morbidity and improve a patient's quality of life. Foot screens can identify and prevent possible diabetic foot ulcers. Finding even small problems can prevent further complications such as an ulcer or amputation from occurring.²

How to perform a foot exam³

- ❖ Make sure your feet are clean and dry
- ❖ Sit on a bed or chair in a well lit room
- ❖ Inspect between toes, top of foot and bottom of foot using a mirror
- ❖ Ask a family member to help if you are unable view any part of your foot
- ❖ Keep a written log of your foot exams including any abnormal findings to track changes in your feet
- ❖ Feel your foot with your hands and scan the surface for bumps, irregular textures, dry or cracked skin, or temperature changes
- ❖ Check in between your toes as well as your toenails and surrounding area
- ❖ Test blood flow by gently squeezing the ball of your toes and letting go. Normal color should return within 5 seconds

What to Look For³



- ❖ Blisters
- ❖ Sores
- ❖ Corns
- ❖ Calluses
- ❖ Red Spots
- ❖ Pain
- ❖ Swelling
- ❖ Drainage from sore
- ❖ Broken toenails
- ❖ Cracked skin
- ❖ Odor

To Reduce Risks...

- ❖ Wash your feet every day
- ❖ Use lotion to soften your skin (but do not apply in between toes)
- ❖ Wear clean white socks
- ❖ Do not walk barefoot
- ❖ Cut toenails straight across
- ❖ Visit the Podiatrist often
- ❖ Check your shoes
- ❖ Make sure shoes have sufficient padding and allows for air circulation
- ❖ Do not wear old worn out shoes or socks
- ❖ Shop for shoes in the afternoon
- ❖ Break in new shoes gradually

*Contact your doctor if you find anything abnormal when performing your foot exam

References

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3. Boike AM, Hall JO. [A practical guide for examining and treating the diabetic foot](#). *Cleve Clin J Med*. 2002 Apr;69(4):342-8. Review.

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