

## Fact Sheet: Foot Care

This fact sheet has been put together to help you gain a better understanding of foot care. Always consult your Health Care Professional before making any changes to your diabetes management plan.

### Why is Foot Care important to people with diabetes?

Over time, high sugar levels caused by diabetes can damage the blood vessels and nerves in your body, causing diabetic neuropathy. This can lead to diabetic neuropathy (nerve damage) which may cause muscular weakness, loss of feeling or sensation, and loss of autonomic functions such as digestion, erection, bladder control and sweating among others. Poor circulation can also result due to damage to the blood vessels. For your feet, this means that they may not be getting a good supply of blood.

If you have diabetes, take care of your feet daily to avoid problems.

### Diabetic neuropathy and poor circulation can turn small foot problems into serious complications.

These complications can include:

- Ulcers (sores) that don't heal
- Corns
- Calluses
- Cracked heels
- Hammertoes
- Bunions
- Ingrown toenails



### Talk to your Doctor about Foot Care:

Treating diabetes includes daily prevention practices, and foot care is one of them. During visits to your doctor, nurse or health care provider, have your feet checked and ask about treatment options if your skin is cracked, or if you have calluses, corns or bunions.

Report all foot care problems and call your doctor right away if you have:

- Signs of redness
- Swelling
- Pain that doesn't go away
- Numbness or tingling in any part of your foot
- Loss of feeling
- Corns, calluses or sores
- Cuts
- Ingrown toenails

Remember: Never treat corns or calluses yourself and do not use medicated pads or attempt to "fix" feet issues on your own. Make an appointment with your doctor as soon as possible if you suspect something is wrong with your feet.



*Best word of advice:*

*By taking care of yourself, you take care of your diabetes; this will go a long way in keeping your blood sugar levels in control and reduce complications!*

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Talk to your doctor, or health care professional about Foot Care today.

## Foot Care: Hints & Tips

**#1: Keep your blood sugar level as close to normal as possible and follow your doctor's advice on diet, exercise and medication.**

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inspect your feet every day, use a mirror to help you see the bottoms of your feet.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carry socks for diabetics at a reasonable price. Some health care providers may provide a sample pair free for your use.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wash your feet every day with lukewarm water and mild soap, never use hot water as you may easily burn yourself without. A good temperature, is the temperature you would use to bathe a newborn baby. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut toe nails carefully. Avoid ingrown toenails by cutting them straight across.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use a soft towel to dry your feet well, patting gently, do not rub your feet. Don't forget to make sure the space between your toes is dry.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Always have something on your feet—do not go barefoot, even in your own home.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use cream or lanolin lotion to keep the skin of your feet smooth. Pay special attention to your heels. Do not apply lotion between your toes, this may promote fungal infection.                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be aware of the temperature; don't let your feet get too hot or too cold. If your feet get cold at night, wear socks to bed. Never use heating pads or hot water bottles to warm your feet. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep your feet dry at all times. Dusting them with non-medicated powder before putting on shoes, socks or stockings will help.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If you smoke, quit. Smoking restricts blood flow to your feet and other extremities.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Always wear clean, dry comfortable socks and change them daily. Avoid socks that are thick or bulky, and those with tight elastic bands. Many department stores now                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have your feet checked regularly at every doctor's visit, and take advantage of health fairs and mobile diabetes clinics.   |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be careful to avoid injury, such as bumping the foot or overdoing an exercise program.  |

## Charcot Foot:

Charcot foot is a serious condition that can lead to foot deformity, disability and amputation. Because of this it is very important that people with diabetes take preventive measures and seek immediate care if signs or symptoms appear. Charcot foot develops as a result of neuropathy.



### How does Charcot Foot happen?

Charcot foot is a condition caused by weakened bones in the foot and can occur in people with significant neuropathy (nerve damage). As the bones in the foot weaken, they fracture and with continued walking will cause the foot to change shape. As this condition progresses the joints will collapse and the foot takes on an abnormal shape (see image).

**Early diagnosis of Charcot foot is important for successful treatment. It is very important to follow your doctor's treatment plan for Charcot foot. Failing to do so can lead to the loss of a toe, foot, leg, or life.**

### Symptoms of Charcot Foot

- Warmth to the touch (affected area will feel warmer than other areas and other foot)
- Redness in the foot
- Swelling in the foot
- Pain or soreness in the foot

### Non-surgical treatment care for Charcot foot consists of:

- Immobilization: the foot is fragile in the early stages, follow your doctors advice on mobility issues.
- Custom shoes and bracing: this can include special shoe inserts, your doctor will see to your custom needs.
- Activity modification: this may be required to avoid repetitive trauma to both feet.

### Charcot Foot Prevention

Daily foot care is important in preventing complications of the foot, such as Charcot foot. Follow the hints and tips above and report all foot care problems to your doctor immediately. Never ignore foot problems, think you sprained your foot? See your doctor!

**Talk to your doctor, or health care professional about Foot Care today.**