

Take Good Care of Your Feet

If you have diabetes, it's important to take care of your feet. Diabetes can cause nerve damage that makes it hard to tell if you have a foot injury. When foot injuries go unnoticed, they can worsen and become infected, sometimes leading to hospitalization or even amputation.

To prevent foot problems:

- **Get regular exams.** Your health care provider should examine your feet at least once a year. Taking off your shoes and socks while you wait for the doctor can be a helpful reminder.
- **Keep your feet clean and dry.** Wash your feet every day and dry them carefully, especially between the toes.
- **Check for injuries.** Check your feet daily for blisters, red marks, cuts, scratches, and infections. Look between your toes. Use a mirror to help you see the bottom of your feet. Ask a family member or friend if you need help. If you notice any injuries or changes in foot color, shape, or feeling, call or see your doctor.
- **Protect your feet from heat and cold.** Wear shoes at the beach and on hot pavement. Test bath water with your hand to be sure it isn't too hot. Never use hot water bottles, heating pads, or electric blankets. If your feet feel cold at night, wear socks.
- **Never walk barefoot, not even indoors.** Wear comfortable shoes that fit well and protect your feet. Check inside your shoes before wearing them. Make sure the lining is smooth and there are no objects inside. Don't wear sandals with toe straps, and don't wear shoes without socks.
- **Buy shoes that are comfortable at the time of purchase.** Wear new shoes for only 1 hour indoors the first day. Check your feet for blisters, and slowly increase the wearing time each day.
- **Wear clean, properly fitting socks.** Don't wear socks that have been mended or have holes. Padded athletic socks can give extra protection.
- **See a doctor or podiatrist for corn and callus removal.** Don't use chemical products or try to cut them yourself. Tell your provider that you have diabetes.
- **Trim your toenails straight across.** If you need help, see your doctor or podiatrist.
- **Protect your circulation.** Put your feet up when you sit. Wiggle your toes and flex your feet up and down from time to time during the day. Don't cross your legs for long periods of time. Don't smoke.

