

10 Steps to Healthy Diabetic Feet

Step # 1. Have your doctor check your feet regularly.

See your family doctor regularly to be sure your diabetes is in good control. Have your doctor look at your feet at every visit.

Step # 2. Wear the right shoes and socks.

Don't wear shoes that fit too tightly or pinch your feet. Choose thick cotton socks and well-cushioned shoes with plenty of room in the toes. (Look for shoes with a high toe box.) This will help keep your feet healthy. Never go barefoot.

Step # 3. Check your feet every day.

Look at your feet very carefully every day to be sure you have no cuts, scrapes, or blisters. Look at every part of your foot, even between your toes.

Step # 4. Treat cuts, scrapes and blisters.

See your doctor if a wound does not heal. If you get a small cut, scrape or blister on your foot wash the area gently with soap and water. Don't break the blister. Put an antibiotic cream on the wound several times a day. If the wound does not heal in a few days see your doctor.

Step # 5. Keep your feet clean.

Gently wash your feet with soap and water every day. Pat your feet dry. Put on a moisturizing cream or ointment (for example, petroleum jelly). Don't put too much moisturizer between your toes, however.

Step # 6. Cut your toenails correctly.

Cut your toenails straight across the top not curved at the sides, to prevent ingrown toenails. Ask your doctor for help if your nails are too thick or they crack when you try to cut them.

Step # 7. Treat athlete's foot.

Athlete's foot is more common in people who have diabetes, and it can cause problems. If you have athlete's foot, wear a different pair of shoes every other day. This lets your shoes dry out. Always wear absorbent cotton socks. See your doctor if over-the-counter treatments don't clear up your athlete's foot.

Step # 8. Get proper treatment for thickened skin, calluses and corns.

Many people with diabetes get thickened skin, calluses or corns over the bony spots on their feet. Don't trim or cut these spots at home with razor blades or other sharp tools. Ask your doctor how to treat these spots.

Step # 9. Avoid heating pads and hot water foot soaks.

Because diabetes can hurt the nerves in your feet, you might not be able to tell if something is hurting your feet. It's best not to use heating pads or hot water soaks since you could burn your feet without knowing it.

Step # 10. Take action to improve your circulation.

High blood pressure, high cholesterol levels and smoking can harm the circulation in your feet and keep sores from healing. Ask your doctor for help if you have any of these problems.

This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.