

Diabetes is a lifelong condition which can cause foot problems. Some of these problems can occur because the nerves and blood vessels supplying your feet are damaged. This can affect:

- ❖ the feeling in your feet (peripheral neuropathy); and
- ❖ the circulation in your feet (ischaemia).

These changes can be very gradual and you may not notice them. This is why it is essential you have your feet screened every year.

Your foot screening has shown that you do not have nerve or blood vessel damage at present and you are currently at a **low risk** of developing foot complications and foot ulcers (which are breaks in the skin) because of your diabetes. The development of foot ulcers in people with diabetes is serious as they are linked to an increased risk of heart attacks, strokes and amputations of the foot or leg.

Controlling your diabetes, cholesterol and blood pressure, quitting smoking, increasing cardiovascular exercise and controlling weight helps to reduce the risk of these life- and limb-threatening problems.

As your feet are in good condition, you may not need regular podiatry treatment.

If you follow the simple advice in this leaflet, you should be able to carry out your own foot care unless you develop a specific problem.

Advice to keeping your feet healthy

Check your feet every day

You should check your feet every day for any blisters, breaks in the skin, pain or any signs of infection such as swelling, heat or redness.

Wash your feet every day

You should wash your feet every day in warm water and with a mild soap. Rinse them thoroughly and dry them carefully, especially between the toes. Do not soak your feet as this can damage your skin.

Moisturise your feet every day

If your skin is dry, apply a moisturising cream every day, avoiding the areas between your toes.

Toenails

Cut or file your toenails regularly, following the curve of the end of your toe. Use a nail file to make sure that there are no sharp edges which could press into the next toe. Do not cut down the sides of your nails as you may create a 'spike' of nail which could result in an ingrown toenail.

Socks, stockings and tights

You should change your socks, stockings or tights every day. They should not have bulky seams and the tops should not be elasticated.

Check your shoes

Check the bottom of your shoes before putting them on to make sure that nothing sharp such as a pin, nail or glass has pierced the outer sole. Also, run your hand inside each shoe to check that no small objects such as small stones have fallen in.

Badly-fitting shoes

Badly-fitting shoes are a common cause of irritation or damage to feet. The professional who screened your feet may give you advice about buying new shoes.

Minor cuts and blisters

If you check your feet and discover any breaks in the skin, or minor cuts or blisters, you should cover them with a sterile dressing and check them every day. Do not burst blisters. If the problems do not heal within a few days or if you notice any signs of infection (swelling, heat, redness or pain), contact your local Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)-registered chiropodist or podiatrist, Podiatry Department or GP (their contact numbers are over the page).

Over-the-counter corn remedies

Do not use over-the-counter corn remedies. They are not recommended for anyone with diabetes as they can cause damage to the skin that can create problems.

Appointments

It is important that you attend all of your appointments with an HCPC-registered chiropodist or podiatrist or local Podiatry Department, as well as all of your other regular diabetes review appointments. This will reduce the risk of problems developing.

Note: At the very least, you should have a diabetes review from your GP every year.

If you have any concerns or discover any problems with your feet, it is important that you contact your GP, diabetes healthcare team or local Podiatry Department for advice as soon as possible.