

# Footcare and diabetes

## Diabetes and Endocrinology Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

Diabetes can reduce the circulation and sensation in your feet, meaning that you may not be as aware of changes in temperature, and of pain and touch. As a result, foot problems may occur without you being aware of them.

Most of these problems may be prevented with care and attention, and regular checkups by a Health Professions Council (HPC)-registered podiatrist. A podiatrist is a person qualified to diagnose and treat problems with the feet and lower legs.

### Daily care

Keep your feet clean by washing them daily and drying them carefully, particularly between the toes. Check for any signs of change including swelling, discharge or changes in colour. This should be a part of your everyday routine.

Make sure you:

- Wash your feet every day in warm water using a mild soap but do not soak them.
- Rinse your skin well after washing and dry carefully especially between the toes.

- Change socks or stockings every day. Wear cotton or wool and avoid socks with tight tops.
- If your skin is dry, apply a little moisturising cream every day. If your skin feels moist, perhaps between the toes, wipe this area with surgical spirit.
- Avoid baths that are too hot. Test the water first with your elbow before getting in, as you may have less awareness of heat and cold with your feet.
- Never sit too close to fires or radiators.
- Before getting into bed, remove hot water bottles. Wear only loose-fitting bed socks on your feet.
- If your toenails are not causing you any problems, cut them after a bath when the nails are softer. Remember to cut them straight across and not too short. File them if that is easier.
- Never cut corns yourself or apply 'over the counter' lotions (those that are available to buy without a prescription) to them.
- Seek advice from your GP, practice nurse or podiatrist for any cuts, blisters or grazes, however minor they may seem.

## **What warning signs should I look for?**

Get into the habit of checking your feet every day. Check for signs of redness or changes to the skin in any part of the foot or leg. Also if one of your feet feels a lot warmer than the other, this might indicate infection or inflammation. In this case you should seek urgent advice from your GP or NHS 111.

If your eyesight is impaired or you have difficulty bending down to check, use a mirror or ask a friend to look for you. As you may be less aware of pain and injury, inspect the inside of your shoes daily for foreign objects or torn linings which might cut your skin.

If you notice any abnormal changes or any discharge, throbbing or itching, consult an HPC-registered podiatrist or your GP as soon as you can and remember to tell them you have diabetes. A podiatrist will be able to treat any corns, callouses, ulcers or pressure sores that may have developed.

## Regular checkups

You should make sure that you attend your annual foot review at your GP practice each year.

## What shoes should I wear?

Never walk barefoot and take care with sandals which leave the toes exposed because of the risk of injury. Wear only well-fitting shoes made out of soft leather, with lace-up or Velcro fasteners that hold the foot firmly in place and prevent it from slipping forward and putting pressure on the toes.

It is important to have a shoe that fits correctly so make sure your feet are measured properly. The shoes should be wide and deep enough to hold your feet comfortably without putting pressure on any part of them. The shoes should hold themselves on and you should never wear slip-on shoes as these will constrict your feet.

New shoes should not be worn for more than two hours the first time you wear them. After this, inspect your feet regularly for any signs of redness that might indicate rubbing.

## Can I find out more?

### The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists

**Tel:** 020 7234 8620

**Website:** [www.feetforlife.org](http://www.feetforlife.org)

**Address:** 1 Fellmonger's Path, Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 3LY

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Diabetes Team on 01384 244399 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 0730510**

ਜੇਕਰ ਇਹ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ (ਛੋਟਾ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਿਹਾਰ) ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਲਿਖਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪੋਸਟ ਇੰਟਰਮੈਸਨ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਨਾਲ **0800 0730510** ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

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ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ (ਉਜ਼ਬੇਕੀ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਾ-ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਨਾਲ **0800 0730510** ਪਰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

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