

# Diabetic Foot Care: You and Your Feet



## Why is foot care important for people with diabetes?

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- A loss of feeling (sensation) or neuropathy can occur with diabetes.
- Loss of feeling in the feet is the largest risk factor for development of foot \*wounds\*.  
\*a wound is also called 'a sore' or 'an ulcer'\*
- Change in the shape of the foot can occur with diabetes.

## What can you do to take care of your feet and health?

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The best thing you can do to prevent a foot problem is to take care of your feet and your health.

### Top tips:

#### 1. Check your feet daily.

Look at your bare feet for red areas, cuts, blisters, cracks, and callouses. Use a mirror for hard to see areas or have someone else check for you.

#### 2. Wash your feet daily.

Wash your feet daily with warm water and non-perfumed soap. Dry well, especially between the toes. DO NOT soak your feet. After washing and drying, put on a thin layer of non-perfumed lotion. Do not put any lotion between your toes.

#### 3. Trim your toe nails.

If you can reach AND see your toenails, trim them when needed, cut them straight across, not rounded. Nail clippers only, no scissors or sharp objects. If you cannot see or feel your feet, have a health care professional to trim your toenails.

Only trained health care professionals should treat callouses, thick brittle nails or blisters. Avoid over the counter corn or callous products. No nail salons.

#### 4. Protect your feet from hot and cold.

Always check water temperature before putting your feet in it. Do not use hot water bottles, electric blankets, space heaters or heating pads to your legs or feet as these may cause burns.

#### 5. Wear well-fitting shoes that will protect your feet at all times, indoors and outdoors.

#### 6. Stop or reduce smoking.

Smoking reduces blood flow and will slow healing.

#### 7. Activity and nutrition.

Being active stimulates blood flow, keeps weight down, and helps with blood sugar control. A dietician can help you make healthy choices for a well-balanced diet.



## What are the signs of foot problems?

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Common signs include:

### **Loss of Feeling/Loss of Sensation**

- Are your feet numb or tingling?
- Can you tell when something touches your foot?
- Have you noticed when you have stepped on an object or have something inside your shoe?

### **Skin Changes**

- Do you have reddened areas, callouses, thickened skin or blisters on your feet?
- Are your feet dry or cracked?

### **Changing Shape**

- Is one foot different than the other? Any change is important.

**Contact your health care provider if you have any of these signs.**

## What should you do if you have a foot ulcer (sore)?

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Report any opening or sore (wound) on your feet to your health care provider. Follow advice from your health care provider. This may include:

- decreasing pressure to the area
- regular visits for assessment and wound care
- controlling your blood sugar

## Top Tips for Footwear

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- Always wear shoes that fit well and offer good protection
- Check in and outside your shoes before putting them on
- Wear light colour socks that are not tight
- Wear shoes at all times, indoors and outdoors
- Wear shoes with closed toes
- Change your socks every day
- Buy shoes late in the day as feet tend to swell through the day
- Replace your shoes regularly
- If you have a loss of feeling or a change in your foot shape, have your shoe professionally fitted by a footwear specialist

## Other Sources For Information:

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[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

[www.foothealth.ca](http://www.foothealth.ca)

[www.lmfna.ca](http://www.lmfna.ca) (foot care nurse lower mainland)

[www.woundscanada.ca](http://www.woundscanada.ca)

[www.worldwidewounds.com](http://www.worldwidewounds.com)

[www.dialadietician.org](http://www.dialadietician.org)

Smoking Cessation Program BC

For wound assessment and treatment, contact your health centres listed below.

### Vancouver

Central Intake:

Vancouver Community Health

604-263-7377

### North Shore

Central Intake:

North Shore Home Health

604-983-6740

### Richmond

Central Intake:

Richmond Community Health

604-278-3361

## Central and Sunshine Coast

Powell River

604-485-3310

Sechelt/Sunshine Coast

604-741-0726

Squamish/Sea to Sky

604-892-2293

Bella Bella/Bella Coola

250-799-5722



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