
Taking Care of Your Feet

Problems can happen with your feet for many reasons, including:

- Poor or decreased blood flow.
- Decreased feeling because of neuropathy (nerve damage).
- Dry skin.

Having poor blood flow makes it difficult for your feet to get needed oxygen and nutrients. Once you have an infection, it can be difficult to heal, even with antibiotics, because there is poor blood supply to the affected area.

If you have nerve damage, you may not feel pain, heat or cold as well as you did in the past. This can make it harder for you to know when or if you have injured your foot.

Dry, cracked skin makes it easier for germs to get into the skin and cause an infection.

Taking care of your feet is one of the most important things you can do.

- Examine your feet daily.
- Wash your feet daily with mild soap and lukewarm water.
- Wear shoes at all times and make sure they fit well.

H O W T O C A R E F O R Y O U R F E E T

Check your feet every day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the bottoms and between toes. • Look for cuts, calluses, scratches, blisters, bruises, swelling, rashes and for color changes. • Feel for hot or cold areas.
Wash your feet every day with mild soap and lukewarm (not hot) water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may not be able to feel how hot the water is with your feet, so test it first with your elbow. • Wash gently between toes and around toenails. • Rinse and gently pat dry each foot with a soft towel. • Make sure you softly pat dry the area between the toes.
Apply lotion if skin is dry. Use foot powder if feet are sweaty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not put lotion between toes. • Use a mild powder. • Rub or dust off excess powder.
File or clip your toenails only after washing and drying your feet. The nails are softer at this time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File or clip your toenails straight across using a toenail clipper. • Never cut or “dig” into the corners of the nail. This could lead to an ingrown toenail. • Do not cut or file toenails shorter than the ends of the toes.
Do not tear off or cut dead skin around calluses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not apply corn pads, wart removers or corn removers.
Wear a clean pair of stockings or socks each day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure your socks or stockings fit well and are not too tight. • Don’t wear knee-high stockings. They may decrease blood flow to your legs.
Wear shoes at all times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear shoes even in the house. You must protect your feet from injury.
Wear shoes that fit well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your feet may not feel pain from poorly fitted shoes, so use extra care when buying new shoes. • Break in new shoes slowly. • Check your feet often when wearing new shoes. • Some people need special shoes. Talk with your diabetes team if you have wide feet, hammer toes, bunions or corns.
Avoid crossing your legs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing your legs can decrease blood flow to your feet.
Take your shoes and socks off when you go to the doctor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The doctor should check your feet every time you go for a visit.
Wash a cut or sore with soap and water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use peroxide, iodine or Merthiolate. • You may use an antibacterial cream.
Don’t place feet near heat source (heater, heating pad).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burns can occur. • If your feet are cold, use socks.
Report to your doctor any cuts, bruises or sores.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your doctor about any problems. • Don’t be fooled by cuts, blisters or sores that don’t hurt.