Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Low risk: Diabetes Foot Care Advice

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Low Risk: Diabetes Foot Care Advice

Patient and Carer Information

Community Podiatry Service

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Introduction

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).

Your foot screening has shown that you do not have nerve or blood vessel damage at present and so you are currently at **low risk** of developing foot complications because of your diabetes. These complications and changes can be very gradual, and you may not notice them.

Controlling your diabetes, cholesterol, and blood pressure, and having your feet screened every year by a suitably trained professional, will help to reduce the risk of developing problems with your feet.

If you smoke, you are strongly advised to stop. Smoking affects your circulation and can lead to amputation.

As your feet are in good condition, you will 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 on 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 ingrowing 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.

Avoid walking barefoot.

If you walk barefoot, you risk injuring your feet by stubbing your toes and standing on sharp objects which can damage the skin.

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 the shoes you are wearing and about buying new shoes.

Minor cuts and blisters

If you check your feet and discover any breaks in the skin, 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 podiatry department or GP.

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.

Signs of Infection

What are the signs of infection?

If you have any of the following please contact your podiatrist/ GP immediately.

These may include:

- Increased pain to the wound area
- Redness
- Swelling
- Increased discharge from the wound
- Fever or raised temperature
- Offensive smell from the wound.
- Break in the skin
- Do you feel unwell?

What to do if you are concerned

- Do not wait for a podiatrist to contact you if your condition gets worse or you have any concerns. Seek help / advice from your General Practitioner (GP) or your podiatrist. If you feel urgent advice is required, you should go to your local Accident and Emergency Department.

In the event of a medical emergency ring 999

SEPSIS

Sometimes a severe infection can spread into your blood stream and be life threatening; this is called Sepsis. The symptoms of Sepsis can sometimes be mistaken as flu, a tummy bug, or a chest infection. Signs of Sepsis include:

- Slurred speech
- Extreme shivering or muscle pains
- No urination in 24hrs
- Breathlessness
- A feeling that you may die.
- Your skin becoming mottled or discoloured.
- You may not always experience pain alongside the symptoms above.

If you have any of the above symptoms of Sepsis, call 111 or go to the Emergency Department (A&E) immediately.

Local contact numbers

Podiatry Department:**0300 707 7700**

Useful websites

www.diabetes.org.uk/feet/taking-care-of-your-feet

www.nhs.uk

www.feetforlife.org





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