

# General Foot Care Guidelines



This handout contains tips to help avoid foot problems. If you develop a foot ulcer, or you already have an ulcer that is not getting better, call the Wound Care Center® for assistance.

## General Foot Care Guidelines

1. Don't go barefoot indoors or outdoors.
  2. Look at your feet daily. Use a mirror to look for any open areas and make sure to look between your toes. Ask a family member or friend to help if you need them.
  4. Wash your feet daily. Dry between your toes. Do not use powder.
  5. If your feet become really dry, moisturize them. Spread a thin film of moisturizing cream or plain petroleum jelly on the soles of your feet while still damp after bathing. Take care not to get the cream between your toes.
  6. Don't use garters or elastics to hold up your stockings.
  7. Don't use panty girdles that are tight around your legs.
  8. Avoid getting your feet too hot or too cold:
    - Don't walk on hot sand or pavement in summer.
    - Put sunscreen on your feet when in the hot sun.
    - Check temperature of bath water before stepping in.
    - Do not use hot water bottles or heating pads to warm cold feet. Wear loose socks at night in bed if your feet are cold.
    - Wear absorbent socks. Change them during the day when needed.
    - Do not wear socks with holes in them.
    - Beware of car heaters on long trips.
- Keep nails trim and cut straight across; don't round corners.
  - Never cut corns or calluses yourself. However, your physician may teach you how to smooth calluses using a pumice stone or emery board (if they are not too thick).
  - Never use store bought corn or callous removers, foot pads, or arch supports.
  - Don't use tape on your feet.
  - Keep feet clean and no dirt between toes.

- Don't stand in one place for more than 15-20 minutes at a time. Walk around to flex your calf muscles.
- Don't place pillows under your knees in bed. Place the pillows under your entire lower leg if you want to elevate your legs.
- Don't smoke. It causes your blood vessels to narrow and can cause poor circulation to your feet.
- Follow your physician's orders to reduce cholesterol and high blood pressure.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Keep your blood sugars at the level your physician recommends
- Exercise every day.
- If your physician orders a cane or walker, use it safely.
- Let your physician know if you have lost feeling or have numbness.
- Look at your feet for ingrown, thick or odd colored toenails.
- Look for toes that curl.
- Look for a change in the shape of your feet.
- Look for a change in how your shoes fit.

### **Foot Wear Tips**

- Buy shoes with a support. Buy shoes that will protect your toes. Buy comfortable shoes that fit. A clerk can help fit them for you.
- Buy new shoes late in the day. Feet can get bigger during the day and the shoes may be too tight.
- Shoes with soft leather uppers can mold to the shape of your feet. The new walking or running shoes may be good for your feet.
- Check with your doctor before wearing sandals. In particular if the sandals have a piece between the toes.

- Don't buy shoes with open toes or heels.
- Have your physician look at your new shoes. Your physician can see if they are a good fit.
- Do not wear your new shoes more than 2 hours at a time. New shoes can rub or cause pressure areas.
- Wear new shoes with socks or stockings.
- Put your hand in your shoes each morning before you wear them. Check for any object that may harm your feet.

### **Hosiery**

- Socks or stockings should be made of 100% cotton or blends. Wool should only be worn in the winter. Make sure the wool does not rub on your skin. Check with your physician or podiatrist for socks made just for people with diabetes.
- Never wear socks with seams.
- Wear only clean socks and change them every day.
- Look at your socks or stockings before and after you wear them.
- Wear absorbent socks. Change them during the day when needed.
- Do not wear socks with holes in them.

### **Follow Up With Your Physician/Podiatrist**

- Be sure to see your physician or podiatrist for a foot checkup at least twice a year. Be sure they know if you are a diabetic.
- Notify your physician or podiatrist if you develop a blister, or sore on your foot.