

Treat Your Feet:

Foot care for people with diabetes



People with diabetes often have trouble with their feet.

Read this booklet to learn 7 steps to help keep your feet healthy.



Patient Education



UHN

Toronto General
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Diabetes raises your risk of developing foot problems.

See your health care team for any of these signs of serious foot problems:

- A sore or blister or thick hard callus
- Pain in your calves when you walk that stops when you rest
- Coldness, cramps, numbness or tingling in your feet or legs
- Your feet are less sensitive to pain, hot or cold
- The skin colour on your toes, feet or legs has changed
- The shape of your foot has changed
- Ingrown nail or loose nail

If you have a foot ulcer, see your health care team right away for these signs of a foot problem that's getting worse.

- Foot pain you didn't have before or pain that's getting worse and/or throbbing
- Foot feels hotter or colder than usual
- Green and brown pus that wasn't there before
- A new smell from your foot
- Flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, muscle aches and fatigue
- Fever (temperature above 38 °C)
- New areas of redness or swelling
- No pain

7 Steps to help keep your feet healthy

1. Check your feet each day

- Look carefully at your bare feet under a bright light. Check the top, sides, heels, soles and between your toes.
- Use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet, or ask someone to help you.



See your health care team right away if you see anything that was not there the last time you looked. For example:

- cuts
- sores
- bleeding
- cracks on your feet or between toes
- blisters
- corns
- calluses and dark areas under the calluses
- swelling
- ingrown toenail
- changes in the normal colour of your skin on your toes and feet (blue, red or white areas)

2. Wash your feet each day

- Wash your feet with warm water, a mild soap, and a soft cloth. Always check the temperature of the water with your elbow. Never use hot water.
- Do not soak your feet. Soaking for longer than 10 minutes can lead to dry and cracked skin.
- Dry your feet well, especially between your toes.
- Use a moisturizer on your feet every day. Don't put it on broken skin or between your toes.
- Wash a blister or sore with clean warm water (no soap). Dry it well and cover it with a bandage.
- See a health care professional today.
- If you have a dressing on your foot, do not get it wet.

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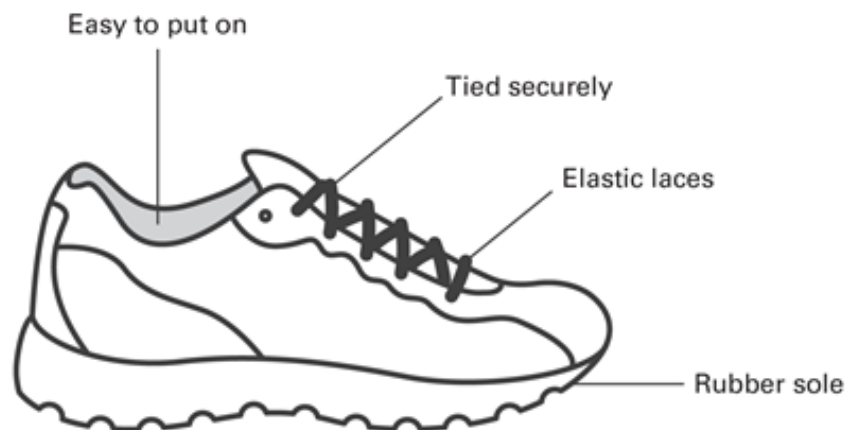
3. Look after your nails and calluses

- Use nail clippers to cut your nails straight across. Gently file any sharp edges.
- If you have trouble cutting your nails, have poor vision, or you don't have feeling in your feet, have a health care professional trim your nails for you.
- Calluses should only be removed by a foot care specialist. Don't use commercial corn or callous removal products.



4. Always wear socks and shoes

- Wear a clean pair of socks each day.
- Socks should be seamless, not be wrinkled or be tight around your toes, ankles or legs.
- If socks have a seam, consider wearing them inside out.
- Always wear closed toed shoes or boots that are comfortable and fit well so they don't rub or pinch your toes and feet. Check inside your shoes for loose objects before you put them on.
- Buy shoes late in the day to make sure they are a good fit, even when your feet are swollen at the end of the day.
- Consider having your footwear fitted by a footwear specialist.
- Don't go barefoot, even in your home.



5. Keep the blood flowing to your feet

- Exercise every day by following what your health care provider has said is safe for you. **If you have a blister or sore on your foot, call your health care provider. Avoid standing or walking when you don't need to until your foot heals.**
- Don't cross your legs or ankles.
- When you sit, wiggle your toes, flex your feet, and change your position by standing up for a short walk.
- Don't smoke and avoid closed rooms where others smoke. Smoking reduces blood flow to the feet.

6. Have a regular foot exam

- Have your feet checked at each visit with your nurse, doctor or foot care specialist.

7. Keep your diabetes under control

- Maintain your blood sugar levels within the target range set by your diabetes team to reduce foot problems and help foot sores to heal.

Why is foot care so important for people with diabetes?

Diabetes can damage the nerves in your feet, causing you to lose feeling. You may not be able to feel pressure from tight shoes or when you step on an object, heat, cold or pain. You may not notice an injury on your foot. If not cared for right away, a small injury can become a serious ulcer that is difficult to heal.

Diabetes can also damage blood vessels, causing poor blood flow to your feet and difficulty with healing.

Make an appointment with a member of your health care team if you notice problems or sores on your feet.

Your team may include:

- Chiropodists or Podiatrists
- Orthotists or Prosthetists
- Diabetes Educators
- Nurses with specialized training in footcare
- Doctors

**The good news is that you can
prevent serious foot problems
caused by diabetes.
Treat your feet every day!**

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information.

Contact us to provide feedback or request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats: pfep@uhn.ca

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