Foot Health Fact Sheet

DIABETES & YOUR FEET

Have you wondered about the connection between diabetes and your feet? Here is what you need to know about your feet and diabetes – and why it is so important to look after your health.

Did you know...

Every day, 280 Australians develop diabetes? That equals around one person every five minutes!

How does diabetes affect feet?

Having diabetes may increase your risk of developing diabetes related-complications that include nerve damage called 'peripheral neuropathy' or poor circulation in your feet called 'peripheral vascular disease'.

Nerve damage may affect how you feel pressure or pain and may lead to numbness in your toes or feet. Changes to your circulation may delay your ability to heal any cuts or sores. This may also increase your risk of developing ulcers that may even lead to amputations.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Feet are often the first place to show such diabetic-related symptoms. This is why it is so important to pay attention to any such changes in your feet if you have diabetes.

Do you have cold feet, numbness, a sharp pain in your leg after walking, pins and needles, or any changes in foot colour, such as redder skin? Also look for any nail changes, corns, calluses, cracked or dry skin. Seek urgent care if you have any signs of an infection, or your skin starts to breakdown – such as via an ulcer or a crack in your heels. Or if you have a new pain, swelling or redness in this area. This is even more important if you have already been diagnosed with nerve damage.

What can you do?

- Make sure your feet are clean and dry, including drying between your toes
- Moisturise your feet every day
- Check your feet every day for changes
- Keep your toenails trimmed
- See your podiatrist regularly – and if you notice any changes to your feet, it is strongly recommended that you seek professional advice from a podiatrist.

How else can you look after your feet?

To prevent future foot problems, try and keep your blood glucose levels in your target range, avoid smoking, and keep physically active. Also, keep up-to-date with your annual cycle of care visits.

By taking the right steps in looking after your diabetes, these complications can be delayed or prevented altogether. For more information call the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588 to speak to a health professional.

Thanks to Diabetes NSW for assistance in compiling this fact sheet.

Find a podiatrist at **podiatry.org.au**

This fact sheet is available as a single page download from podiatry.org.au

Australian Podiatry Association

FOOT HEALTH WEEK

DO YOU NEED TO SEE A PODIATRIST?

DOES THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

- ☐ Can you can only walk for a short period before your feet or legs hurt?
- ☐ Do you experience pain in your lower limbs at night?
- ☐ Do you experience tingling in your feet?
- ☐ Have you noticed your legs or feet are swollen?
- ☐ Do you have cuts or fissures on your feet that take a long time to heal?
- ☐ Are you returning to sport after an injury?
- ☐ Are you uncertain about which running or sports shoe to buy?
- ☐ Do you find that you wear out the outside of your shoes quickly?
- ☐ Have you noticed your toes poke holes in the top of your shoes?
- ☐ Does your forefoot become hot and painful after running or walking?
- ☐ Do your hips hurt?
- ☐ Has pain in your feet or legs stopped you from exercising?
- ☐ Are you worried about your child's feet?
- ☐ Do you have arthritis in your feet?
- ☐ Do you experience reoccurring gouty attacks?
- ☐ Are you worried about the thickness of your nails?
- ☐ Do you have discoloured toe nails?
- ☐ Are you worried about your foot odour?
- ☐ Do your toe nails cause you pain?
- ☐ Have you noticed your toes are clawed?
- ☐ Do you have hard skin on your feet? Is it getting worse?
- ☐ Do you find it hard to cut your own nails?
- ☐ Do you find it hard to fit your feet into shoes because of your bunion?

Ticked one or more boxes? Then you need to see a podiatrist.

GO SEE A PODIATRIST BECAUSE...

Podiatrists are Foot Health Experts and understand the structure and movement of your feet and lower limbs.

They can assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, knee, leg or hip pain.

Given your feet alone house a quarter of the bones in your entire body, a podiatrist is best placed to get you moving, active or pain-free.

FIND A PODIATRIST NEAR YOU

Contact the Australian Podiatry Association at **podiatry.org.au** and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.

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