

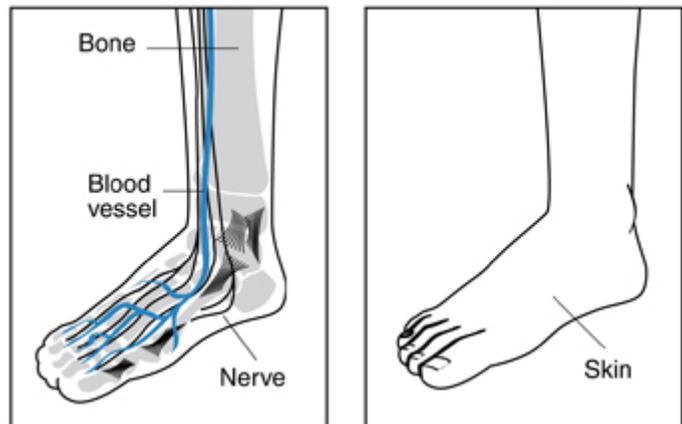
Foot Care for People with Diabetes

Why is it important to take care of my feet?

People with diabetes have a special reason to treat their feet well. Meticulous foot care and the choice of suitable footwear can prevent serious damage.

How does diabetes affect feet?

Having diabetes can cause serious problems. Diabetes may reduce the circulation to your feet. It can also damage the nerves in your feet. Sometimes diabetes can weaken the immune system, which fights infections. For all these reasons, people with diabetes may have problems with the bones, blood vessels, nerves and skin of their feet. Good foot care is very effective in preventing these problems.

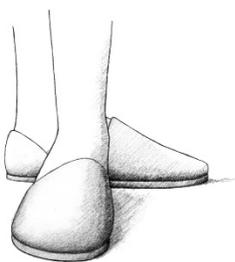


How should I take care of my feet?



Inspect your feet everyday, front and back. If it is difficult to see your feet, use a hand-held mirror. See the other side of this flier for things you should look for. If a cut or sore does not heal within a few days, call your physician or podiatrist. Wash your feet every day in lukewarm, not hot, water. Use a mild soap. Dry your feet well, especially between your toes. Pat them dry - do not dry by rubbing hard.

To prevent dryness and cracking of the skin, apply a lanolin-based lotion or cream every day. Do not apply lotion or cream between your toes. Always wear shoes or slippers to protect your feet from cuts. Change your socks every day. Don't walk barefoot, either indoors or outdoors.



Wear comfortable shoes that cover your toes and heels. Your toes should not be cramped -- you should be able to wiggle them. Wear soft socks with no seams. Your shoes should not be too big or too small.

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Shoe must protect and support the feet.

Shoe must accommodate foot deformities



Shoe shape must match foot shape

Check your shoes before putting them on. Make sure that nothing has fallen inside them. Feel inside them to make sure that nothing has penetrated the soles.

Ask your physician or podiatrist to show you how to cut your toenails. Or, file them straight across instead of cutting them. See a podiatrist if you have corns or callouses. Don't try to treat them yourself.



Exercise your feet. Walk regularly. Walking improves blood flow to your feet. Once a day, spell out the alphabet in the air with each foot. This will help keep your feet keep your feet flexible.

What should I look for?

Call your physician or podiatrist right away if you notice any of these problems.

- **Changes in skin color** Redness may be a sign of infection. Darkened skin may mean that tissue has died. Blue skin may mean poor blood flow.
- **Open wound, drainage, bleeding, or odor.** White or yellow moisture, bleeding, or odor may be a sign of infection.
- **Swelling.** A swollen foot may be infected or have evidence of Charcot foot.
- **Toenail infections.** A darkened, flaking, or distorted toenail may mean a fungal infection. This can make the toenail grow to the side. If this happens, the toenail may damage the surrounding skin. An infection may result.

- **Ingrown toenails.** Cutting nails too short or wearing tight shoes may cause toes to grow into the skin.
- **Temperature changes.** Infection or Charcot foot may cause warm spots. Poor blood flow may cause cool spots.
- **Changes in feeling.** Numbness, burning, or tingling may be caused by nerve damage in the feet.

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