

# Footcare for at risk feet

Learn to look after your feet at home to help you  
avoid developing problems with your feet!



**REED FOOTCARE CLINIC**  
PROFESSIONAL FOOTCARE EXPERTS



# Diabetes

There are several types of diabetes including type 1, type 2, gestational diabetes and prediabetes. Irrespective of the type of diabetes you have, this booklet gives you some advice and guidance on what you can do at home to keep your feet in good condition, reducing your risk and keeping you on your feet.

## Levels of risk



With diabetes, your feet are at risk of complications that may lead to amputation. The longer you have diabetes and the less controlled your blood sugars, the higher your risk of complications. These complications can include nerve damage (diabetic neuropathy), eye damage (retinopathy) and cardiovascular disease. There are a number of symptoms of diabetes that put you at greater risk of complications with your feet including:

**Poor circulation** can cause a person with diabetes to heal much slower from wounds leaving them prone to infection.

**Lack of sensation** or feeling in the feet can mean that you do not notice any wounds or cuts to the feet or can stand on items that damage your feet.

**Dry skin** on your feet and legs can become cracked and cause a wound that can be slow or difficult to heal

Even for a patient with diabetes that is well controlled could become high risk if an injury is sustained.





# Daily care for your feet



## Check your feet daily

It is important that you check your feet daily, between your toes, around the bottom of your foot and the back of your heels. Check for any changes to your feet, any cuts, bruises, callus, corns, blisters, or any colour changes, redness or swollen areas. If you cannot check your feet yourself, then ask someone else to do this for you or use a mirror to check your feet. If you notice any changes then please contact your podiatrist to further investigate and treat any issue.



## Wash your feet daily

Be sure you wash your feet everyday. Use a basin of warm water and a mild soap or skin wash. Make sure you check the temperature of the water to ensure that it is not too hot (you can use your elbow to check the temperature). Do not leave your feet in the water for too long, just wash and dry to avoid drying out your skin.



## Dry your feet thoroughly

It is essential that you dry your feet thoroughly especially between the toes. Use a soft towel to dry the feet but use a paper towel or cotton wool to dry between the toes to avoid damaging the skin between your toes.





# Daily care for your feet

## Cream your feet

To help keep your skin on your feet in good condition, and avoid it drying out too much, use a foot cream on the feet. Be sure you do not use the cream between the toes as this might cause a fungal infection such as athlete's foot. If you notice any itching or skin damage between the toes then contact your podiatrist to get it checked out.



## No barefoot walking

Make sure you always wear your shoes to protect your feet particularly around the house as walking barefoot could cause damage to the soles of your feet. Even the smallest bruise, blister or cut may cause a problem and make sure you check your feet daily for wounds.



## Footwear

Choosing the correct shoes to comfortably fit your feet and will not cause damage is important. Avoid narrow, high heels or slip on shoes as these will potentially cause damage. Also ensure that the soles of the shoes offer sufficient grip with the ground to avoid falling and that the fabric of the shoe will allow your feet to breathe and not restrict your foot. Get your foot measured when buying new shoes to ensure a good fit.





## Hints and tips for feet



### Nail Trimming

It is important that your skin and nails on your feet are taken care of professionally on a regular basis. Do not attempt to trim your nails yourself to avoid any issues. We advise that you make a regular appointment with a podiatrist to get your nails trimmed and skin taken care of properly.



### Unexplained Leg Pain

If you find you start experiencing unexplained leg pain that presents suddenly, or is occasional or progressively getting worse then get in touch with your GP immediately to get it checked - do not ignore leg pain.



### Regular Foot Checks

A key part of the upkeep of feet when you have diabetes is a neurovascular assessment which your podiatrist will carry out for you. This will involve a series of tests to assess the condition of your lower limb and track any damage or issues caused by diabetes.



### Peripheral Neuropathy

Peripheral Neuropathy is the term given to nerve damage of the feet (and hands) caused by diabetes. It happens when the blood glucose levels have been uncontrolled causing nerve damage and can cause tingling, numbness and pins and needles in the feet.





# Hints and tips for feet



## Exercise

Taking regular exercise will help keep you on your feet. You don't need to be running marathons! Rather getting a regular walk in at a good pace for 20 to 30 minutes daily can help control your blood glucose levels, lower your risk of heart disease and nerve damage and improve your circulation.



## Holidays

We all love to get away for a break, but there are some key things to remember when on holiday. Make sure you wear a sunscreen on your feet. Don't break in new shoes or sandals to avoid damage to the feet. Do not walk barefoot in the sea, along the shoreline/beach or even around the pool. Keep you feet covered and protected.



## Socks

Socks have the potential to cause damage to your feet if they are too tight. Make sure you choose socks that have no elastic in the cuff (known as diabetic socks) to avoid pressure on the leg. Also choose a sock in a fabric that allows your feet to breathe and have soft fibres so they do not cause friction such as cotton, wool or bamboo.



## Keep moving....

It is important to avoid sitting for long periods of time. You can encourage good blood flow to the feet by moving every half an hour. Even if its just to get up and make a cup of tea! When sitting, move your feet clockwise and anti-clockwise to exercise your muscles.





## Checklist for your feet



Wash your feet daily and dry carefully between the toes



Examine your feet daily - get help if required or use a mirror



Moisturise your feet daily but avoid creaming between the toes



Wear comfortable footwear and socks and check your shoes before putting them on (particularly the soles of the shoes for damage).



Do not walk barefoot - always make sure you have footwear on particularly if walking outside



Do not cut your own toenails - get a trained professional to do it



Make sure you get your feet checked by a podiatrist or your diabetic team at least once a year

Contact your doctor/podiatrist if you notice any changes to your feet including any change in colour, sensation of your feet or any unexplained swelling, cuts, smells, breaks in skin or discharge.





## Care For your feet

If you need further assistance with your feet then please contact us by telephone or email. We look forward to helping keep you on your feet!



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