

Diabetic Foot Care

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas is making little or no insulin, or when the body is not making good use of it. When food is consumed, all carbohydrates in our food is broken down into glucose. Insulin is a hormone which helps glucose get through our blood stream into the cells.

Diabetes leads to high glucose levels in the blood (known as hyperglycaemia). Prolonged high glucose levels can damage various organs and tissues in the body. Common foot complications include reduced sensation and limited circulation to the feet.

What is Diabetic Neuropathy?

Diabetic neuropathy is the damage to your nerves by high glucose levels. This causes loss of protective sensation such as feeling of pain, sharp and blunt, hot and cold and joint movement in space.

With loss of sensation, you are more easily injured and less likely to get help for the injury earlier on. Diabetic neuropathy can also cause painful sensations such as burning, tingling, pins and needles or numbness.

What is peripheral vascular disease?

Poor circulation to limbs is known as peripheral vascular disease. Diabetes affects circulation to the feet. This causes cold feet, poor healing and poor tissue regrowth.

With bad circulation, nutrient supply to the feet is slowed. Due to poor nutrient supply, skin in the feet is often unhealthy and thinned which is easily damaged. Cuts or open wounds in the diabetic feet will take longer to heal which results in higher infection rates and can lead to ulceration or gangrene.

How do I reduce chances of foot complications?

- Maintaining healthy glucose levels, keeping levels consistent and avoid large fluctuations
- Maintaining healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Maintaining healthy body weight
- Reduce or quit smoking
- Reduce or quit alcohol drinking habits
- Staying active and exercise regularly

Looking after your feet:

Even if you have no neuropathic or vascular complications, it is still important to look after your feet.

- Have annual foot checks with your GP practice and ask to be referred to a podiatrist if you are concerned
- Check your feet daily for any redness, open lesions, discharge or blood, blisters. **See a podiatrist or your GP immediately if you notice anything unusual**
- Wash and dry your feet daily, taking care not to miss areas in between the toes
- Moisturise your feet daily but do not apply in between toes
- Avoid going barefoot and always check inside your shoes before you put them on
- Wear good fitting shoes, making sure they're wide enough and have plenty of room for your toes
- Wear good fitting socks which protect your feet from moisture and friction, seamless socks are the best
- Always check the temperature of your bath and stay away from direct sources of heat such as fire or heater
- Make sure your nails are trimmed and filed regularly
- Do not attempt to treat callous or corns, always consult your Podiatrist

Please call our clinic 0800 333 233 if you have any questions or problems

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