

## Reducing The Risks

### What Should I Do If I Have An Infection?

An infection may be present if you see any combination of these Symptoms:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Open sores
- Pus
- Red streaks
- Warmth

You may not feel any pain in this area due to the loss of sensation. The first thing you should do is call your Chiropodist/ Podiatrist. If it is after office hours, call your doctor's emergency number.

For a minor infection, your Chiropodist/ Podiatrist will clean the infection and may give you antibiotics to keep the infection from spreading and help heal it. You will need to dress your wound at least once per day. Your Chiropodist/ Podiatrist will want to see you for follow-up visits to be sure the infection is healing properly.

Prompt detection of an infection in its earliest stages will help to avoid a possible hospital stay. In addition to diabetes, the following conditions are also at risk for severe foot problems and should be seen regularly by a Chiropodist/ Podiatrist:

- Arthritis
- Psoriasis
- Poor circulation
- Visual impairment
- Systemic disorders
- Foot infections
- Neuropathy

## Other Services

- Foot and ankle injuries
- Ingrown nails
- Flat feet
- Fallen arches & hammertoes
- Warts, bunions & callouses
- Muscle spasms & tendonitis
- Orthotic needs
- Geriatric & pediatric orthopedic conditions

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## DIABETIC FOOTCARE

Foot care is important for everyone, but for the person with diabetes, it is essential. Diabetes affects the nervous system and circulation. It slows the natural healing process, and increases the risk of infection, so that minor injuries may quickly become serious.

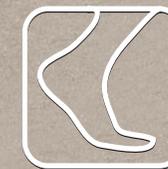


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Diabetic Ulcer

The feet are often the first part of the body to be affected by this disease, but serious problems can be prevented by paying careful attention to your feet on a daily basis.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” was never so true as for feet affected by diabetes. Poor foot care can lead to serious problems, and even amputation.

## Why Is Special Care Required?

Foot problems are common in people with diabetes. This is why you need to check your feet for cuts, abrasions and signs of irritation everyday and to protect them with proper footwear. When you do not protect your feet properly, infections can develop from minor injuries.

## Here Are A Few Reasons Why This Happens:

Diabetes can damage nerves in the feet making them less sensitive to pain. This means that you may not feel a minor cut or abrasion until severe infection develops.

Diabetes can cause reduced circulation. This is a problem since proper blood flow is necessary for healing injuries.

Elevated blood glucose can interfere with the body's ability to fight infection from cuts and abrasions. It also hampers the healing process. You can reduce your risk of infection by keeping your blood glucose under control. Also, learn how to properly care for your feet. It will pay off as you get older.

## How To Care For Your Feet

Your Chiropodist/ Podiatrist will teach you how diabetes affects your feet, and will set up a foot care program for you. Most people with diabetes can care for their own feet, however diabetics with diminished eyesight and neuropathy should be seen on a regular basis for evaluation and foot care. To properly care for your feet, you should do the following each day:

### Washing

Wash your feet with mild soap and lukewarm water. Always check the water temperature with your elbow or another part of your body where sensation is good before putting your feet in.

Never soak your feet for longer than 5 minutes. This dries the skin and makes it more prone to cracking and infection.

Use a soft washcloth to clean your feet thoroughly and get all the soap off.

Use a soft towel to dry your feet, especially between your toes. Never dry or warm your feet by putting them on or near a radiator or heater.

### Examining

Inspect your heels and the tops and bottoms of your feet for skin irritations or breakdown. Look for sores, cuts, blisters, cracks between the toes and blue, purple or white spots. Be sure your feet feel warm and that there are not any red “hot” spots or swelling. As well, check for irritation or scaling between the toes. If you cannot see the bottoms of your feet, use a mirror. If you are unable to examine your feet yourself, have someone do it for you. Notify your Chiropodist/ Podiatrist immediately if anything looks unusual.

## Skin Care

Apply a water-soluble moisturizing cream such as Vaseline Intensive Care, Nivea or Lac-Hydrin to keep your skin soft. This is especially important for dry and calloused skin. Never use cream between your toes or on open sores. Do not use perfumed lotions that contain alcohol.

## Corns And Callouses

Gently and gradually rub down corns, callouses and other hard skin with a pumice stone or emery board. This is most effective after a bath or shower.

See your Chiropodist/ Podiatrist if you cannot examine your feet adequately, have reduced sensation, or if you have poor circulation. Have your Chiropodist/ Podiatrist remove corns or callouses if they are a problem, never remove them yourself. Also over-the-counter corn and callous remedies contain acid and could burn your skin.

## Toenails

Cut your nails after a bath when they are soft.

To avoid cutting skin around the toe, trim toenails straight across using nail clippers, or file with an emery board. Do not use scissors.

Carefully file sharp toenails edges to prevent them from cutting into adjacent skin.

If it is difficult to trim your own nails, or if you have reduced sensation or poor circulation, schedule an appointment with your Chiropodist.

## Footwear

Wearing proper footwear is essential in preventing and healing foot ailments. Diabetics and high-risk patients should schedule a footwear education appointment with their Chiropodist/ Podiatrist. It is also advisable to bring along footwear that you are presently wearing. Sometimes special insoles are made to go into your shoes to make you comfortable and prevent problems.