

## Diabetic Foot Care for the High Risk Foot

Your foot exam shows you are at **high risk** for serious foot problems. Your healthcare provider will talk with you about any extra appointments you might need for your feet.

### How to Lower Your Chances of Amputation

1. **Stay off your foot with the sore** (ulcer) as much as possible. You might need to use crutches or special footwear to keep weight off the sore.
2. **If you smoke, try to quit or cut down.** Smoking can cause less blood to flow to your foot making it harder for your foot to heal. If you want help ask your healthcare provider.
3. **Check your feet daily.** Look between your toes and at the top and bottom of your feet. Use a mirror or ask someone to help if you can't see your feet. Look for swelling, redness, new areas of breakdown, or changes to your sore. Check if there is more fluid leaking from the sore or there is a smell (odour). **If you see these changes call your healthcare team right away** to make an appointment.
4. **Wash your feet daily and dry well especially between your toes.** Check the water temperature if you have lost protective sensation by using your elbow or a thermometer. The temperature should be between 32 to 35°C (90 to 95°F). ***Diabetes can cause decreased foot sensitivity to pain and/or temperature changes, increasing the risk for burns.*** If you have a wound dressing that covers your sore, follow the directions from your healthcare provider to properly clean your feet.
5. **Have someone who is properly trained cut your toe nails.**
6. **Apply a moisturizer (lotion) on dry or hardened skin** at the top and bottom of your feet. Do NOT apply between your toes or on any open sores, unless you are told to do so by your doctor. ***Lotion applied between the toes can cause moistness and damage the skin.*** You could benefit from a moisturizer containing urea, ask your pharmacist for more information.

## Steps toward good foot health (Reproduced with permission from Diabetes Canada 2018 Clinical Practice Guidelines)

### Do:

- Do wear shoes that fit well. Shoes should have good support, do not rub or pinch your feet, and have low heels (less than 5 cm or 2 in). Consider having your shoes “professionally fitted”.
- Do buy your shoes late in the afternoon, as your feet may swell slightly during the day.
- Do wear socks at night if your feet get cold.
- Do put your feet up when you are sitting.
- Do wiggle your toes and move your ankles for 5 minutes, 2 or 3 times a day, to help blood flow in your feet and legs.
- Do activity every day to improve blood flow through your body.

### Do NOT:

- Do not use over-the-counter medicines to treat warts or corns. They can cause skin trauma and increase risk of infection.
- Do not wear anything tight around your legs such as tight socks or knee highs. This is not good for your circulation.
- Do not go barefoot. Always wear shoes inside and outside your home.
- Do not use hot water bottles, heat bags, or heating pads on your feet. Diabetes can decrease foot sensitivity to pain and/or temperature changes, increasing the risk for burns.
- Do not cross your legs or sit for long periods of time.
- Do not smoke. Smoking decreases blood flow and healing. It also increases the risk of amputation.
- Do not use over-the-counter insoles unless recommended by your foot expert. They can cause blisters if they do not fit well.
- Do not cut skin or calluses yourself; this can cause injury leading to infection.

## Your self-care management plan

As you take care of your feet, you need to closely watch your blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Keep track of your results to make it easier to review and plan your care. Together you and your healthcare provider will decide on the best levels for you.

Indicator	Present Level	Goal Level
Blood sugar or A1C		
Blood pressure		
Cholesterol		
My next foot exam is due:		

