

Diabetic Foot Care for the Moderate Risk Foot

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

How to Lower your Chances of Having Serious Foot Problems

1. **If you smoke, try to quit or cut down.** Smoking can cause less blood to flow to your foot making it harder for foot ulcers to heal. If you want help, ask your healthcare provider.
2. **Check your feet daily.** Look between your toes and at the top and bottom of your feet for swelling, redness, sores, corns, or calluses. Use a mirror to check the bottoms of your feet or ask someone to help you if you can't see your feet. ***Diabetes can lead to loss of sensation, causing injuries to go unnoticed.***
3. **Wash your feet daily** with warm water and mild soap. Make sure you dry well between your toes. Do not soak feet – ***soaking feet can lead to dry skin and cracks, increasing the risk of infection.***
4. **Have someone who is properly trained** cut your toe nails.
5. **Apply a moisturizer (lotion) on dry or hardened skin** at the top and bottom of your feet. Do NOT put moisturizer between your toes. ***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.
6. **Wear shoes that fit well.** If you have lost feeling in your feet, have your shoes professionally fitted. Poorly fitting shoes can lead to pressure areas, corns, calluses, and blisters which can lead to sores on your feet or toes.
7. **Have your feet checked by your healthcare provider on a regular basis.**

Call your healthcare provider **right away** and ask for an appointment if you have any of these:

- Cold, painful, discoloured (pale, blue, or red) feet
- Red, hot, swollen feet that may or may not be painful
- New or increasing pain in your lower legs or feet
- Any open sore on your foot that is draining

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 day. 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: | | |

