

Be Sweet to Your Feet if You Have Diabetes

by the National Diabetes Education Program



Taking care of your feet is very important for people with diabetes. Good foot care helps reduce your risk for serious foot problems that can lead to amputations. To decrease your risk of foot problems, learn to manage the **ABCs** of diabetes. This means keeping your blood glucose (as measured by the A1C test), blood pressure, and cholesterol in the target range recommended by your health care provider. Ask your health care provider about your diabetes ABCs and how to do a foot exam at home.

Be sweet to your feet by following these foot care tips:

- **Check your feet every day** (evening is best) for cuts, blisters, red spots, swelling, and sore toenails. If you have trouble bending over to see your feet, use a plastic mirror or ask a family member or caregiver to help.
- **Wash your feet every day in warm water**, and be sure to dry well between the toes.
- **Rub a thin coat of skin lotion on the tops and bottoms of your feet**, but not between your toes.
- **Trim your toenails carefully and straight across when needed.** See your podiatrist if you need help.
- **Never walk barefoot, and wear comfortable shoes that fit well and protect your feet.** Nerve damage can cause loss of feeling. Look and feel inside your shoes before putting them on. Ask your team about getting special shoes.
- **Keep the blood flowing to your feet** by wiggling your toes and moving your ankles up and down for 5 minutes, two or three times a day.
- **Plan a physical activity program with your health care team.**
- **Take your shoes and socks off at every check up and have your doctor look at your feet.** Tell your health care team right away about any foot problems.
- **Let your doctor know right away if you have loss of feeling in your feet, changes in the shape of your foot or foot ulcers or sores that do not heal.**

For a free copy of *Take Care of Your Feet for a Lifetime*, contact the National Diabetes Education Program at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or call 1-888-693-NDEP (6337); TTY: 1-866-569-1162.

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