



**Wolverhampton
Diabetes Care**

The Foot Complications

Foot problems can affect anyone who has diabetes. People with diabetes need to take special care of their feet.

Why do I need to take care of my feet?

Diabetes may cause poor circulation and reduced feeling in the feet leading to damage. This might lead to infection, ulcers and even amputation. Whether your feet are normal or not, you should take full care of them to avoid any problems.

What are the risks?

You might take risks with your feet without thinking of it e.g. walking barefoot. Ill fitting shoes can cause damage by rubbing. Your feet may be misshapen and prone to bunions or corns.

Over and above these things that can affect anyone other problems can develop. Nerve damage (neuropathy) causes loss of feeling. This tends to make the foot warm, dry and numb to feeling. You may not be aware of any pinching or small cuts. You might not feel a stone in your shoe. If these injuries go unnoticed they may become infected and an ulcer can form. The circulation to your feet may also be affected (ischemia) and the foot tends to be cold and sometimes painful and any damage will not heal so well. The problems of nerve damage and poor circulation can occur together.

If you injure your foot or an ulcer develops, this can be difficult to heal sometimes needing several months of treatment and so it's best to prevent problems happening.

How can I help myself?

The risk of ulceration is decreased by following the do's and don'ts of diabetic foot care.

Do not ignore even the slightest injury to your feet. Examine feet daily. Use a mirror if necessary. You may not be aware of any foot injuries. Report any sores, swelling, skin damage or change in colour to your doctor or podiatrist. Keep your feet clean. Use a moisturising cream on dry skin. Be sure to treat any Athlete's Foot problems that are causing moist skin or cracks between the toes. . Avoid extremes of temperature such very hot baths, sitting close to fires/radiators, or using hot water bottles. Never use surgical blades or corn pairing knives on your feet. Avoid using corn plasters. They contain acid which may cause problems. Always check inside your shoes/slippers for any objects before you put them on. Always be careful when buying new shoes to ensure that they are a proper fit and break them in gradually. Know how to cut your toenails properly.

Seeking advice and what care to expect

Everyone with diabetes should have full education about there foot care at the start and whenever they wish to seek advice. You should know exactly how to look after your feet. If you are dependent on others for foot care – they should be trained too. If you ever have any concern about your feet talk to your medical team who will advise.

At the very least, you must have an annual foot examination by your medical team.

According to this foot examination and whether it reveals any risk, you may need to be under chiropody care regularly or under the specialist diabetes foot team.

You must report urgently to your team if there are any foot problems.