



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Northern Health
and Social Care Trust



Foot Care
for people with diabetes

Foot Care for people with diabetes





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As a Diabetic

You may have been told that it is especially important to take good care of your feet. There are several reasons for this.

Diabetes may hinder the blood supply to your feet or it may affect the nerve supply.

If there is poor blood supply, any cuts or open wounds on the foot may be more difficult than usual to heal.

If the nerve supply is affected, pain or 'pins and needles' may occur. This might make it more difficult to recognise heat or cold or the sensation of touch on the skin. If loss of feeling occurs you may not notice small cuts or damaged skin. In fact, you may not feel pain at all.

Most people with diabetes, however, are unlikely to have serious problems with their feet and it should be remembered that **prevention is better than cure.**

Corns and Callouses



- Leave these to your podiatrist.
- Do not cut your corns and callouses yourself or let a well meaning friend or relative do them for you.
- **Do not use corn paints or plasters** - these often contain acids which can be dangerous.
- If you require foot appliances or special footwear, consult your podiatrist as these can be made for you by your podiatrist or obtained through the hospital department.





Skin

- Your skin may be very dry. If so, use an emollient cream such as E45 after daily bathing.
- If your skin is very sweaty, dab with a little surgical spirit.
- After daily bathing, examine your feet carefully watching for:
 - **any change in colour of any part of the foot or leg;**
 - **discharge from a break in the skin, a corn or from under a toe nail; and**
 - **troublesome itching, pain, throbbing or swelling.**

If you notice any of these you should seek advice immediately from either your podiatrist or doctor.

Heat and Cold



- Check the temperature of bath water using a bath thermometer - it must not exceed 42°C or 110°F.
- Do not sit too close to fires or heaters.
- Remove hot water bottles before getting into bed.
- Switch off electric under-blankets before getting into bed.
- Bed socks, if worn, should be woollen and must be loose fitting.
- Avoid getting cold from wet feet - dry them carefully and change socks or stockings and footwear.
- Keep feet warm especially in winter - wear woollen socks.
- Never use hot poultices or fomentations.



- Ideally your shoes should:
 - be made of soft leather;
 - have no fancy stitching around the toe area;
 - have a heel of no more than 1¹/₂ inches;
 - have the heel attached firmly to the sole of the shoe; and
 - have a broad heel - **not** a stiletto type.
- Never wear someone else's shoes.
- Court and casual shoes should only be worn for short periods of time.
- Slippers are only suitable if worn for short periods of time.
- Always check inside your shoes for 'foreign' objects or roughness before putting them on.
- Change shoes regularly - airing in an open space after use.
- For summer, open sandals with adjustable straps are more suitable than mules.

REMEMBER

The price of the shoe does not matter, the maker of the shoe does not matter; but **the shape and fitting of the shoe is important.**





First Aid

- Minor cuts should be gently cleansed with warm water, dressed with a mild antiseptic cream and covered with a sterile gauze dressing.
- Cover a blister with a sterile gauze dressing and leave to 'dry up' on its own. If it breaks, apply an antiseptic dressing and keep covered until it has healed.
- **Never burst a blister.**
- Never place adhesive strapping directly over a wound.
- If minor injuries do not respond to your own treatment within a few days - it is advisable to see either your podiatrist or doctor.

Going on Holiday

- Long journeys on trains, buses and planes can make your feet swell. Walk up and down the aisle every half hour as the exercise will help keep the swelling down. Also take a pair of adjustable sandals for the journey.
- Do not walk barefoot. Wear plastic sandals on the beach and in the sea.
- Avoid sunburn to your feet and legs. Use a high protection sun screen or keep them covered.
- Take some small sterile dressings, antiseptic cream and non-allergic plasters such as 'Micropore', with you.
- Remember to carry out the daily examination of your feet.





Further Information

Nearest clinic:

Phone:

Your podiatrist is:

and is available at this clinic on:

Day:

Time:

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