

## Foot Care for Patients With Diabetes

Check your feet every day. Inspect the tops, sides, soles, heels, and between your toes. Look for the following:

- Dry and cracked skin
- Blisters or sores
- Bruises or cuts
- Redness, warmth, or tenderness
- Firm or hard spots

Seek assistance from your health care provider if you see any changes in your feet or if you get a foot injury. Do not try to treat foot problems on your own. Even small sores or blisters can become big problems if they become infected and do not heal. Most patients with diabetes can prevent any serious foot problem by following some simple steps.



Always wear shoes and socks. Do not walk around barefoot.

### Prevention

Your health care provider will examine your feet at least once a year. Be prepared and take off your shoes and socks while you wait to see your health care provider.

Call or see your health care provider if you have cuts or breaks in the skin, or have an ingrown nail. It is important to tell your health care provider if your foot changes in color, shape, or just feels different (for example, becomes less sensitive or hurts).

If you have corns, calluses, or you cannot trim your toenails, your health care provider can trim them for you safely.

### Foot Care Tips

- Check your feet daily. Look at your bare feet for blisters, cuts, red spots, and swelling. If you cannot see your feet, ask someone to help you or use a mirror.
- Ask your health care provider about Medicare coverage if you need to get special shoes.
- Wash your feet daily. Be sure to dry them thoroughly, especially between the toes.
- Keep your skin soft and smooth. Rub a thin coat of lotion on the tops and bottoms of your feet, but not between your toes.
- Keep your toenails trimmed. If you can see and reach your toenails, trim them straight across and file the edges with an emery board or nail file.
- Always wear shoes and socks. Do not walk around barefoot. Wear comfortable shoes and check inside before putting them on. Be sure there are no bumps or rips in the lining and there are no objects inside your shoes.
- Protect your feet from hot and cold. Wear shoes on hot pavement or on the beach. Test hot water before putting your feet in it. Never use heating pads, hot water bottles, or electronic blankets. You may burn your feet without knowing it.
- Keep the blood flowing to your feet. Put your feet up when you're sitting. Wiggle your toes and move your ankles up and down for 5 minutes, 2 or 3 times a day. Don't cross your legs for extended periods of time. Above all, don't smoke.
- Get started now. Begin taking good care of your feet today. Set a time every day to check your feet.