

DIABETES & YOUR FEET

Did you know...

Every day, 280
Australians develop
diabetes? That equals
around one person
every five minutes!

Have you wondered about the connection between diabetes and your feet? Here is what you need to know about your feet and diabetes – and why it is so important to look after your health.

How does diabetes affect feet?

Having diabetes may increase your risk of developing diabetes related-complications that include nerve damage called 'peripheral neuropathy' or poor circulation in your feet called 'peripheral vascular disease'.

Nerve damage may affect how you feel pressure or pain and may lead to numbness in your toes or feet. Changes to your circulation may delay your ability to heal any cuts or sores. This may also increase your risk of developing ulcers that may even lead to amputations.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Feet are often the first place to show such diabetic-related symptoms. This is why it is so important to pay attention to any such changes in your feet if you have diabetes.

Do you have cold feet, numbness, a sharp pain in your leg after walking, pins and needles, or any changes in foot colour, such as redder skin? Also look for any nail changes, corns, calluses, cracked or dry skin. Seek urgent care if you have any signs of an infection, or your skin starts to breakdown – such as via an ulcer or a crack in your heels. Or if you have a new pain, swelling or redness in this area. This is even more important if you have already been diagnosed with nerve damage.

What can you do?

- Make sure your feet are clean and dry, including drying between your toes
- Moisturise your feet every day
- Check your feet every day for changes
- Keep your toenails trimmed
- See your podiatrist regularly – and if you notice any changes to your feet, it is strongly recommended that you seek professional advice from a podiatrist.

How else can you look after your feet?

To prevent future foot problems, try and keep your blood glucose levels in your target range, avoid smoking, and keep physically active. Also, keep up-to-date with your annual cycle of care visits.

By taking the right steps in looking after your diabetes, these complications can be delayed or prevented altogether. For more information call the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588 to speak to a health professional.

Thanks to Diabetes NSW for assistance in compiling this fact sheet.



Find a podiatrist at podiatry.org.au

This fact sheet is available as a single page download from podiatry.org.au



Do you need to see a podiatrist?

Here is a handy checklist. Do you...

- Have painful feet?
- Experience leg pain?
- Have painful knees?
- Experience sore hips?
- Find walking or standing uncomfortable?
- Experience leg or foot pain during sport?
- Need advice on correct footwear?

Ticked one or more boxes? Then you need to see a podiatrist.

Go see a podiatrist

Because...

- ✓ Podiatrists are Foot Health Experts and understand the structure and movement of your feet and lower limbs.
- ✓ They can assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, knee, leg or hip pain.

Given your feet alone house a quarter of the bones in your entire body, a podiatrist is best placed to get you moving, active or pain-free.

Find a podiatrist near you

Contact the Australian Podiatry Association at podiatry.org.au and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.



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